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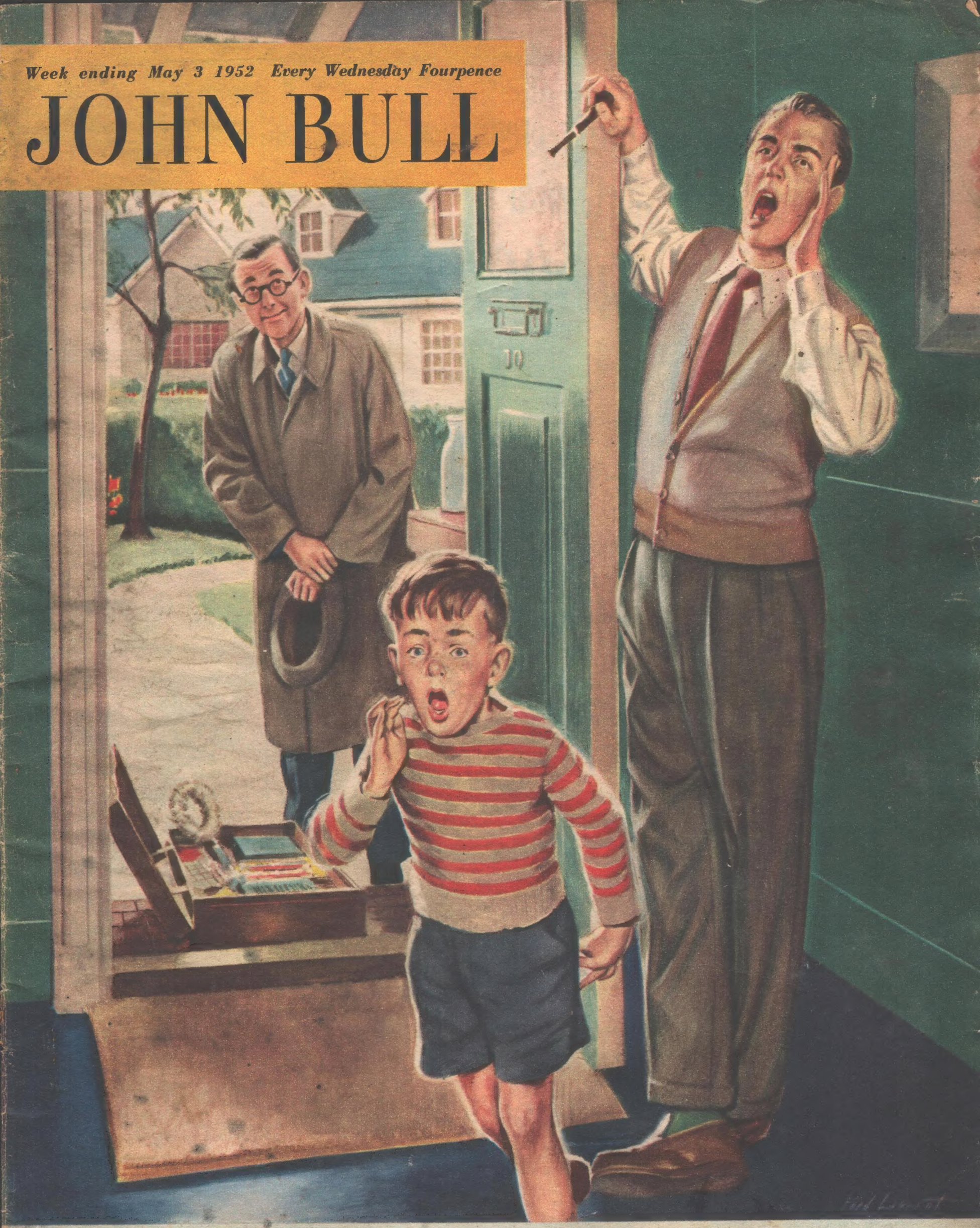

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Players in chains

THE FOOTBALL SEASON is ending, but not the troubles of the players. League and Cup matches attract a crowd of forty-five million each year, but in this most popular of British games the conditions for League players amount almost to legalized slavery.

At the end of each season a player's contract with his club automatically comes to an end. You would think that he would then be free to do as he pleased—as in any other occupation.

Not a bit of it. The club has the whip hand.

IF the player wants to join another club he cannot without his club's consent, although it can throw him out if it wishes.

A club can easily prevent a player who is unwilling to sign a new contract from playing anywhere else. All it has to do is either to pay him the minimum wage of £332 a year, or put him on the transfer list with such a big fee attached that no other club will take him. In the second case he is neither paid a wage nor allowed to play football.

MAXIMUM wage for a footballer is £14 a week during the season of forty weeks and £10 a week for the other twelve weeks. Most players get less. Yet the average net takings (after all expenses are paid) of a First Division club are £64,000 a year.

It is true that every five years a player can be paid a benefit of not more than £750, although it is usually a good deal less. He can also get a part of that benefit when he is transferred.

But neither payment is by any means a right, and often they are not made at all. And a club is not compelled to pay a player a bonus of £2 for a win and £1 for a draw.

Another amazing thing is that, short though a player's contract is—it is limited to fifteen months—new conditions can be put into it without his agreement.

If a player has a dispute with his club he can appeal to various bodies connected with the Football League or Football Association. But he may not be represented by a union official or a lawyer. And, even if he is being unfairly deprived of his livelihood, he may not take his case to the law courts.

The "tied" footballers are at the mercy of their clubs. No wonder they have a sharp sense of grievance.

LAST August a Committee of Investigation was appointed by the Minister of Labour. The Committee sat through the winter and recently issued its report. It got almost nowhere.

The Committee recommended that transfer fees should be limited to £15,000. It advised that one-third of the fee should go to the club, one-third be used for the good of the game, and one-third go to a benevolent fund for footballers.

It agreed that the wages should go up, that payments for representative matches should be increased, that match bonuses should be compulsory.

Various other recommendations were made to ease the hard lot of the player. But it is by no means certain that any of the proposals will be accepted by the clubs and the F.A.

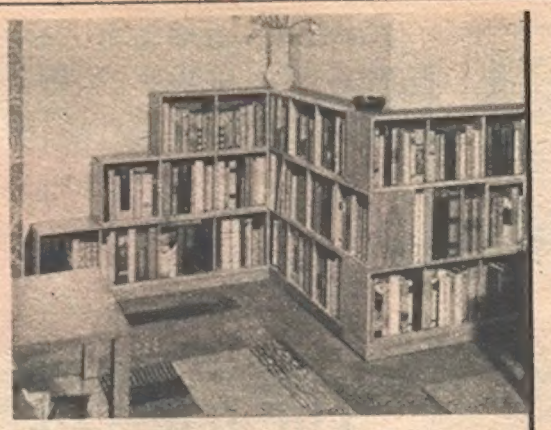
STRANGELY, the Committee did not suggest an end to the system by which clubs can sack their players on the spot but prevent their leaving if they want to go. Even the mild plea that a player should have the protection of a three-year contract was rejected.

The conditions imposed on footballers have not been suffered by any other wage earners since the last century. How much longer will they be tolerated?

During the close season ahead, the opportunity should be taken to press home the case for freeing the "tied" footballer from out-of-date and almost barbaric restrictions on his personal liberty.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

FRED LAURENT, a Belgian artist, escaped to England in 1940 and has stayed on ever since. Although he fought with the Commandos in the war, he loses his nerve when confronted with a door-to-door salesman. "They have only to take one look at me and before I know it I've been sold," he says. Consequently he always shouts for his English wife. Consulting neighbours about this, he found they shout for their wives, too!



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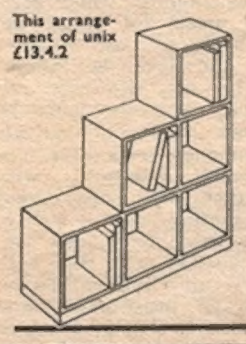

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FREE SPEECH

The trials of being a doctor's wife

SINCE the recent pay increases were granted to doctors, many girls are doubtless dreaming of a life of luxury and ease as a doctor's wife. I have been one for twelve years, and I should like to disillusion them.

The doctor's wife has many difficulties to face. She must learn to watch with equanimity while carefully prepared meals are ruined because of her husband's late return—not just now and again but almost every day of her life. However out-of-sorts she may feel, she must be pleasant to her husband's patients when they telephone, and answer even incredibly stupid questions with patience and tact. She must understand that any outing—even a visit to the cinema—is liable to sudden cancellation, and must learn to cope with a husband who is called out at all hours, is almost always overworked, and seldom in a mood to display his bedside manner to his wife. If she can do all these things, she will have earned the happiness which being a doctor's wife can undoubtedly bring. —MRS. M. D., London, N.W.

The Certain Sex

THE SHOP ASSISTANT who wrote ("Free Speech," April 12) that a man knows what he wants when he comes up to the counter but most women cannot make up their minds, has got it wrong. From twelve years' dealing with the public, I know that the reverse is true. Women know what they want and will not be put off with any alternative; men are uncertain and can be persuaded more easily.—MRS. B. C. TOWSE, 139 Henchman Street, London, W.12.

Cutting Holiday Costs

NO ONE NEED ALLOW a holiday to be spoilt by the high cost of travel. Last year I used all my savings to buy a motor cycle, learned to ride, passed my test and set off for Scotland. I went to

Loch Lomond: Part of the £12 holiday route

Carlisle, Lockerbie, Glasgow, the Trossachs, through Glencoe to Fort William, then down the Road to the Isles, and spent two days exploring and gazing at Rum, Eigg and Skye. The beauty and grandeur surpassed anything I had ever seen, and to ride beside almost the whole length of Loch Lomond was equally lovely. The entire holiday, which covered 1,256 miles, cost under £12.—MISS C. M., Glos.

. . . With a friend, I had a twelve-day holiday in the Highlands at a cost of £11 19s. for the two of us. We went by bus to Glasgow and then sailed to the head of Loch Lomond. After that we walked, used buses, sailed on ferries and had some lifts. We stayed at Youth Hostels and provided our own food, always living well. I hope to take the high road again this year. —MRS. C. A. E. WELD, 66 Rosehill Road, Burnley, Lancs.

. . . Holidays in France need not be expensive. The single third-class rail fare from Calais to Paris is only £1 10s. 9d. Nearly every French town has at least one Youth Hostel, though very few are of a standard comparable with those in Britain. It is necessary to book in advance for the Paris hostel, which is not in the centre of the city but near the Porte d'Orleans Metro station. For those who like camping, there is cheap accommodation under canvas in the centre of Paris at rue Barbet de Jouet, a stone's throw from Les Invalides.—COLIN J. HAMER, 113 Beaconsfield Street, Bolton.

The Joys Of Dusting

I HAVE JUST WATCHED my mother dust the living-room. To do this, she had to move no less than twenty-five articles, including empty vases, photographs, brass candlesticks, numerous

ashtrays and various other household oddments. She goes through the same routine every day, each time lifting each object, dusting it and then replacing it. Do housewives actually enjoy all this cleaning?—KEITH M. BOAT, 56 Cavendish Road, Leicester.

Wasting Tons Of Coal

BEING A LOCOMOTIVE FIREMAN, I have enough interest in my job to want to save coal, knowing that the more I save the less I have to shovel, and I was very pleased to read your Editorial "Our Coal Is Golden" (JOHN BULL, April 5). But we go on wasting coal, and I think we always shall. Hundreds of new men who come to the footplate don't, for some considerable time, get wise to the economies that are possible. So they go on wasting tons of coal. Some never get wise, because they don't care enough. We have a fuel inspector, but what is one among so many? I have suggested that firebox thermometers should be installed as a guide to the firemen when to fire and when not to. But it seems that it would be too expensive.—W. CRAWFORD, 9 Willow Grove, Marple, Cheshire.

No Time For Grumbles

HOW MANY PEOPLE have noticed what a cheerful outlook on life disabled persons have? Since losing an eye and my left leg two years ago, I have been in close contact with other patients in hospitals and limb-fitting centres and have always found them ready for a laugh at their own expense and seldom sorry for themselves. They are so intent on overcoming their individual disabilities that they find no time for grumbling over the smaller troubles of everyday life.—E. W. HOOK, c/o 38 Briarwood Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

Bath In A Teacup

DENNIS HOLMAN'S article "Learning To Be Happy Though Shipwrecked" (JOHN BULL, April 5) was very interesting and, having experienced the effects of thirst in the Western Desert, I can appreciate how necessary these tests are. I have seen 10s. offered and refused for a cup of water during the Khamsin period, when the hot winds were blowing from the south. The ration in the desert was four pints per man per day and it was considered possible to wash, shave and bathe in a cup of water. Highly prized loot was the water from the radiators of knocked-out vehicles.—J. A. BAKER, 42 Chadwick Road, Middlewich, Cheshire.

August Rush Puzzle

WHY MUST AUGUST be the popular holiday month for people who do not have to consider when school term ends? Before our children were of school age, we always took our holidays in May or June when the days are longer and the weather just as likely to be fine (or foul). Now that we are forced to choose August, we find that accommodation is scarce and expensive, booked not only by people like ourselves but by unattached young people and older parents with grown-up children.—MRS. P. M. PARROTT, 2 Coronation Road, Aldershot, Hants.

On The "Other Side"

REGINALD M. LESTER'S series of articles on spiritualism (JOHN BULL, March 22-April 26) showed that he is a sincere writer. But during his "talks" to his dead wife through a medium, did he take the opportunity to ask the one thing we all want to know: what is it like "on the other side"? If he did ask this question, what was the reply? If he did not, why not?—MICHAEL CORPER, 42 Grasmere Ave., Wembley, Middlesex.

A further article by Reginald M. Lester, dealing with this point and other questions raised by his series, will appear in JOHN BULL *shortly.*

Liverpool On The Dart

KEITH ELLIS'S article on the Liverpool Pilotage Service (JOHN BULL, March 22), with its accompanying picture of *Liverpool Pilot*, struck a chord in my memory. Searching through our album, I found the enclosed snapshot of myself taken by my

husband while on holiday in Devon two years ago. What was *Liverpool Pilot* doing on the River Dart at that time?—MRS. BETTY PROSSER, Louvain, 18 Church Road, Lydney, Glos.

She was built in a shipyard on the River Dart, and launched in 1950.

Who Spreads The Litter?

NOW THAT THE holiday season is approaching and people who live in towns are looking forward to trips to the country, may I, as a Londoner now living on a Welsh hillside, say a word in defence of hikers and tourists who are so often blamed for littering the countryside? In my experience here, country folk are the worst offenders in this respect. The road I live on is strewn the year round with empty cartons and old newspapers. Tins are thrown into hedges and fields, and slack is deposited on grass verges. Streams are dumping grounds for rusty buckets, farm implements and even iron bedsteads.—A. L. D., Carmarthenshire.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

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Lewis Serrocold leaned over the desk. "Inspector Curry," he said seriously, "someone is poisoning my wife." Curry jerked forward in his chair

They do it with mirrors

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

Miss Marple faced the ugly truth: one of this crazy household was a killer

TO THE WORLD, Miss Jane Marple was a dithery village spinster with eccentric mannerisms. Mrs. Ruth Van Rydock, who had been to school with her, knew better; behind those vague blue eyes, she knew, was a needle-sharp brain. And when, on a quick visit from America, she had a problem, she lost no time in telling Miss Marple about it.

She was worried about her sister, Carrie Louise Serrocold. Carrie Louise was married to a crank, Lewis Serrocold, who had turned their home, Stonygates, into a college for delinquents. The money for the college came from the Gulbrandsen Trust, left by Carrie's first husband, Eric Gulbrandsen.

Mrs. Van Rydock did not know why she was worried. She was merely aware something was wrong. And Miss Marple, no stranger to intuition, agreed to go to Stonygates to find out.

She was met at the station by Edgar Lawson, an alarming young man whose fantastic claim was, first, that he was the son of Churchill and, later, that he was Montgomery's son; he was one of the delinquents, Miss Marple learned.

But Edgar Lawson was not the only baffling thing about Stonygates. In addition to 200 delinquents, there were the children and stepchildren of Carrie Louise's previous marriages.

The day after Miss Marple arrived, there was another visitor. Christian Gulbrandsen, son of Carrie Louise's first husband and an executor of the Trust, came on an unexpected visit from America to see Lewis Serrocold, who happened to be away. While he awaited his return, Gulbrandsen seemed strangely concerned about Carrie Louise's health.

The night Lewis Serrocold returned, there was a curious scene after dinner. Christian Gulbrandsen had just retired to his room when Edgar Lawson, in an hysterical state, burst into the Great Hall and melodramatically accused Lewis Serrocold of being his father. Serrocold's pacifying treatment, carried on in the study to which he drew Lawson, was clearly heard by the assembled company in the hall. They heard, too, the pistol shot (a backfire in the park, said Carrie Louise calmly) followed a few minutes later by two more, clearly from the study.

But when the door was at length opened, no damage had been done. Edgar Lawson was slobberingly contrite; Serrocold out of breath but calm. He refused to countenance calling the police. But Miss Bellever, Carrie Louise's companion, had taken the matter out of his hands. Arriving at that moment, she announced: "I've called the police. Mr. Gulbrandsen has been shot dead."

PART 2

The Police Move In

IT was a moment or two before anyone took in what Miss Bellever was saying. Carrie Louise said incredulously: "Christian shot? Dead? Oh, surely, that's impossible."

"Impossible? If you don't believe me," said

Miss Bellever, pursing her lips, and addressing not so much Carrie Louise as the assembled company, "go and look for yourselves."

Slowly, unbelievingly, Carrie Louise took a step towards the door. Lewis Serrocold put a hand on her shoulder.

"No, dearest. Let me go."

He went out through the doorway. Dr. Maverick, with a doubtful glance at Edgar, followed him. Miss Bellever went with them.

Miss Marple gently urged Carrie Louise into a chair. Her eyes looked hurt and stricken.

"Christian—shot?" she said again. It was the bewildered, hurt tone of a child.

Walter Hudd, the ex-G.I. husband of Carrie Louise's granddaughter, Gina, remained close by Edgar Lawson, glowering down at him. In his hand he held the gun that he had picked up from the floor.

Mrs. Serrocold said in a wondering voice: "But who could possibly want to shoot *Christian?*" It was not a question that demanded an answer.

Walter muttered under his breath: "Nuts! The whole lot of them."

Stephen Restarick, Carrie Louise's stepson by her second marriage, had moved protectively closer to Gina. Her young, startled face was the most vivid thing in the room.

Suddenly the front door opened and a rush of cold air together with a man in a big overcoat came in. The heartiness of his greeting seemed incredibly shocking.

"Hallo, everybody. What's going on tonight? A lot of fog on the road. I had to go dead slow."

FOR a startled moment, Miss Marple thought that she was seeing double. Surely the same man could not be standing by Gina and coming in by the door. Then she realized that it was only a likeness and not, when you looked closely, such a very strong likeness. The two men were clearly brothers with a strong family resemblance, but no more. Where Stephen Restarick was thin and wiry, the newcomer was sleek. The big coat with the astrakhan collar fitted the sleekness of body snugly. A handsome young man, and one who bore upon him the authority and good humour of success.

But Miss Marple noted one thing about him. His eyes, as he entered the hall, looked immediately at Gina.

He said, a little doubtfully: "You *did* expect me? You got my wire?" He was speaking now to Carrie Louise. He came towards her.

Almost mechanically, she put up her hand to him. He took it and kissed it gently. It was an affectionate act of homage, not a mere theatrical courtesy.

She murmured: "Of course, Alex dear—of course. Only—things have been happening——"

"Happening?"

"Christian Gulbrandsen"—it was Mildred Strete, Carrie Louise's middle-aged widowed daughter, who spoke—"my brother Christian Gulbrandsen has been found shot dead."

"Good God!" Alex registered a more than life-size dismay. "Suicide, do you mean?"

Carrie Louise said swiftly: "Oh, no! It couldn't be suicide. Not *Christian*! Oh, no."

"Uncle Christian would never shoot himself, I'm sure," said Gina.

Alex Restarick looked from one person to the other. From his brother Stephen he received a short confirmative nod. Walter Hudd stared back at him with faint resentment. Alex's eyes rested on Miss Marple with a sudden frown. But no one bothered to explain her presence, and she continued to look an old, fluffy and sweetly bewildered old lady.

"When?" asked Alex. "When did this happen, I mean?"

"Just before you arrived," said Gina. "About—oh, three or four minutes ago, I suppose. Why, of course, we actually heard the shot. Only we didn't notice it—not really."

"Didn't notice it? Why not?"

"Well, you see, there were other things going on then. . . ." Gina spoke rather hesitantly.

"Sure were," said Walter with emphasis.

Juliet Bellever came into the hall by the door from the library. "Mr. Serrocold suggests that we should all wait in the library. It would be convenient for the police. Except for Mrs. Serrocold. You've had a shock, Cara. I've ordered some hot bottles to be put in your bed. I'll take you up and——"

Rising to her feet, Carrie Louise shook her head. "I must see Christian first," she said.

"Oh, no, dear. Don't upset yourself——"

Carrie Louise put her very gently to one side. "Dear Jolly—you don't understand." She looked round and said, "Jane?"

Miss Marple had already moved towards her. "Come with me, will you, Jane?"

They moved together towards the door. Dr. Maverick, coming in, almost collided with them.

Miss Bellever exclaimed: "Dr. Maverick. Do stop her. So foolish."

Carrie Louise looked calmly at the young doctor. She even gave a tiny smile.

Dr. Maverick said: "You want to go and—see him?"

"I must."

"I see." He stood aside. "If you feel you must, Mrs. Serrocold. But afterwards, please go and lie down and let Miss Bellever look after you. At the moment you do not feel the shock, but I assure you that you will do so."

"Yes. I expect you are quite right. I will be quite sensible. Come, Jane."

Christian Gulbrandsen's room was furnished as a sitting-room more than a bedroom, with a bed in an alcove to one side and a door leading into a dressing-room and bathroom.

Carrie Louise stopped on the threshold. Christian Gulbrandsen had been sitting at the big mahogany desk with a small portable typewriter open in front of him. He sat there now, but slumped sideways in the chair. The high arms of the chair prevented him from slipping to the floor.

Lewis Serrocold was standing by the window. He had pulled the curtain a little aside and was gazing out into the night. He looked round and frowned.

"My dearest, you shouldn't have come." He came towards her and she stretched out a hand to him. Miss Marple retreated a step or two.

"Oh, yes, Lewis. I had to—see him. One has to know just exactly how things are."

She walked slowly towards the desk.

Lewis said warningly: "You mustn't touch anything. The police must have things left exactly as we found them."

"Of course. He was shot deliberately by someone, then?"

"Oh, yes." Lewis Serrocold looked a little surprised that the question had even been asked. "I thought you knew that."

"I did, really. Christian would not commit suicide, and he was such a competent person that it could not possibly have been an accident. That only leaves"—she hesitated a moment—"murder."

She walked up behind the desk and stood looking down at the dead man. There was sorrow and affection in her face. "Dear Christian," she said. "He was always good to me." Softly, she touched the top of his head with her fingers. "Bless you and thank you, dear Christian," she said.

INSPECTOR CURRY and his entourage found Miss Bellever alone in the great hall when they arrived. She came forward efficiently. "I am Juliet Bellever, companion and secretary to Mrs. Serrocold."

"It was you who found the body and telephoned to us?"

"Yes. Most of the household are in the library—through that door there. Shall I lead the way?"

"If you please."

He followed her along the corridor.

For the next twenty minutes the routine of police procedure was duly set in motion. The photographer took the necessary pictures. The police surgeon arrived. Half an hour later, the ambulance had taken away the mortal remains of Christian Gulbrandsen, and Inspector Curry started his official interrogation.

Lewis Serrocold took him into the library and he glanced keenly round the assembled people, making brief notes in his mind. An old lady with white hair, a middle-aged lady, the good-looking girl he'd seen driving her car round the countryside, that odd-looking American husband of hers. A couple of young men who were mixed up in the outfit somewhere or other, and the capable woman, Miss Bellever, who'd phoned him and met him on arrival.

Inspector Curry had already thought out a little speech and he now delivered it as planned.

"I'm afraid this is all very upsetting to you," he said, "and I hope not to keep you too long this evening. We can go into things more thoroughly tomorrow. It was Miss Bellever who found Mr. Gulbrandsen dead, and I'll ask Miss Bellever to give me an outline of the general situation, as that will save too much repetition. Mr. Serrocold, if you want to go up to your wife, please do, and when I have finished with Miss Bellever I should like to talk to you. Is that all quite clear? Perhaps there is some small room where——"

Lewis Serrocold said: "My office, Jolly?"

Miss Bellever nodded, and said: "I was just going to suggest it."

She led the way across the great hall, and Inspector Curry and his attendant sergeant followed her.

Miss Bellever arranged them and herself suitably. It might have been she and not Inspector Curry who was in charge of the investigation.

The moment had come, however, when the initiative passed to him. Inspector Curry had a pleasant voice and manner. He looked quiet and serious and just a little apologetic. Some

Gina gasped. She stared at Stephen Restarick

with a look of dismay. "But they couldn't possibly think it was one of *us*!" she burst out

people made the mistake of under-rating him.

"I've had the main facts from Mr. Serrocold," he said. "Mr. Christian Gulbrandsen was the eldest son of the late Eric Gulbrandsen, the founder of the Gulbrandsen Trust and Fellowship . . . and all the rest of it. He was one of the trustees of this place and he arrived here unexpectedly yesterday. That is correct?"

"Yes."

Inspector Curry liked her conciseness. He went on: "Mr. Serrocold was away in Liverpool. He returned this evening by the 6.30 train."

"Yes."

"After dinner this evening, Mr. Gulbrandsen announced his intention of working in his own room, and left the rest of the party here after coffee had been served. Correct?"

"Yes."

"Now, Miss Bellever, please tell me in your own words how you came to discover him dead."

JULIET BELLEVER cleared her throat noisily. "There was a rather unpleasant incident this evening. A young man, a psychopathic case, became very unbalanced and threatened Mr. Serrocold with a revolver. They were locked into this room. The young man eventually fired the revolver—you can see the bullet-holes in the wall there. Fortunately, Mr. Serrocold was unhurt. After firing the shots, this young man went completely to pieces. Mr. Serrocold sent me to find Dr. Maverick—he is a resident doctor. I got through on the house phone but he was not in his room. I found him with one of his colleagues and gave him the message, and he came here at once. On my own way back I went to Mr. Gulbrandsen's room. I wanted to ask him if there was anything he would like—hot milk or whisky—before settling for the night. I knocked, but there was no response, so I opened the door. I saw that Mr. Gulbrandsen was dead. I then rang you up."

"What entrances and exits are there to the house? And how are they secured? Could anyone have come in from outside without being heard or seen?"

"Anyone could have come in by the side door to the terrace. That is not locked until we all go to bed, as people come in and out that way to go to the college buildings."

"And you have, I believe, between two hundred and two hundred and fifty juvenile delinquents in the college?"

"Yes. But the college buildings are well secured and patrolled. I should say it was most unlikely that anyone could leave the college unsponsored."

"We shall have to check up on that, of course. Had Mr. Gulbrandsen given any cause for—shall we say rancour? Any unpopular decisions as to policy?"

Miss Bellever shook her head. "Oh, no. Mr. Gulbrandsen had nothing whatever to do with the running of the college or with administrative matters."

"What was the purpose of his visit?"

"I have no idea."

"But he was annoyed to find Mr. Serrocold absent, and immediately decided to wait until he returned?"

"Yes."

"So his business here was definitely with Mr. Serrocold?"

"Yes. But it would be—because it would be almost certainly business to do with the Institute."

"Yes, presumably that is so. Did he have a conference with Mr. Serrocold?"

"No, there was no time. Mr. Serrocold only arrived just before dinner this evening."

"But after dinner, Mr. Gulbrandsen said he had important letters to write and went away to do so. He didn't suggest a session with Mr. Serrocold?"

Miss Bellever hesitated. "No. No, he didn't."

"Surely that was rather odd—if he had waited on at inconvenience to himself to see Mr. Serrocold?"

"Yes, it was odd." The oddness of it seemed to strike Miss Bellever for the first time.

"Mr. Serrocold did not accompany him to his room?"

"No. Mr. Serrocold remained in the hall."

"And you have no idea at what time Mr. Gulbrandsen was killed?"

"I think it is possible that we heard the shot. If so, it was at twenty-three minutes past nine."

"You heard a shot? It did not alarm you?"

"The circumstances were peculiar."

She explained in rather more detail the scene between Lewis Serrocold and Edgar Lawson which had been in progress.

"So it occurred to no one that the shot might actually have come from within the house?"

"No. No, I certainly don't think so. We were all so relieved, you know, that the shot didn't come from in here. Later, of course, I thought it must have been only a backfire from Mr. Restarick's car, but just at that moment——"

"Mr. Restarick's car?"

"Yes. Alex Restarick. He arrived by car this evening—he arrived just after all this happened."

"I see. When you discovered Mr. Gulbrandsen's body, did you touch anything in the room?"

"Of course not." Miss Bellever sounded reproachful. "Naturally, I knew that nothing must be touched or moved."

"And just now, when you took us into the room, everything was exactly as it had been when you found the body?"

MISS BELLEVER considered. She sat back, screwing up her eyes. She had, Inspector Curry thought, one of those photographic memories.

"One thing was different," she said. "There was nothing in the typewriter."

"You mean," said Inspector Curry, "that when you first went in, Mr. Gulbrandsen had been writing a letter on the typewriter, and that that letter had since been removed?"

"Yes, I'm almost sure that I saw the white edge of the paper sticking up."

"Thank you, Miss Bellever. Who else went into that room before we arrived?"

"Mr. Serrocold, Mrs. Serrocold and Miss Marple."

"Which is Miss Marple?"

"The old lady with white hair. She was a schoolfriend of Mrs. Serrocold's. She came on a visit about four days ago."

"Well, thank you, Miss Bellever. All that you have told us is quite clear. I'll go into things with Mr. Serrocold now. Ah, but perhaps—Miss Marple's an old lady, isn't she? I'll just have a word with her first and then she can go off to bed. Rather cruel to keep an old lady like that up," said Inspector Curry virtuously. "This must have been a shock to her."

Miss Bellever went out. Inspector Curry looked at the ceiling. "Gulbrandsen?" he said. "Why Gulbrandsen? Two hundred-odd maladjusted youngsters on the premises. No reason any of them shouldn't have done it. Probably one of them did. But why Gulbrandsen? The stranger within the gates."

Sergeant Lake said: "Of course, we don't know everything yet."

Inspector Curry said: "So far, we don't know anything at all."

He jumped up and was gallant when Miss Marple came in. She seemed a little flustered, and he hurried to put her at her ease.

"Now, don't upset yourself, ma'am." The old ones like "ma'am," he thought. To them, police officers were definitely of the lower classes and should show respect to their betters. "This is all very distressing, I know. But we've just got to get the facts clear."

"Oh, yes. I know," said Miss Marple. "So difficult, isn't it? To be clear about anything, I mean. If you're looking at one thing, you can't be looking at another. And one so often

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Major Helen fights to save sinners

by MARJORIE EARL

For sixteen hours a day, seven days a week, the little Salvation Army major wages war against the Devil. And every move she makes is laid down in the book of rules

A wet night in London's Edgware Road—but Major Helen is there to lead the singing

MAJOR HELEN NELSON, officer commanding Corps 140 of the Salvation Army, is a small, prim, intrepid enemy of the Devil, with a firm handclasp, a resolute step, a frank and guileless manner, and clear blue eyes which gaze with disconcerting directness through horn-rimmed spectacles from beneath the brim of her neat bonnet.

Her voice, which she has carefully trained to rise in supplication, fall in tenderness, harden in condemnation and soften in urgent pleading at the appropriate moment, is enriched by a Scots accent. Her complexion, unadorned by make-up, is exquisitely clear and bright because she gets plenty of fresh air and exercise, eats a simple, healthy diet and rests the burden of her worries upon the Lord.

These matters of diet and fresh air, as well as everything else in her life, are prescribed in a 535-page, red cloth-bound book called *Orders and Regulations for Officers of the Salvation Army*, and familiarly referred to as "O and R" by Major Helen and her comrades-in-arms. "O and R" tells an officer what he shall eat and wear, when to get up and go to bed, how to breathe correctly, how to act when abused, how to treat drunks, prostitutes, roughs and toughs, how to conduct his business and regulate his pleasure, when to be gay and when to be serious, what to do in the case of illness, how to fight discouragement and, most important of all, how to save sinners.

The hallmark of a good officer is his success at soul saving, and in this mission he is enjoined by "O and R" to "fight hard, search long and contrive wisely" and to "be a daring blood and fire salvationist, rushing to the very mouth of hell to rescue sinners." He is told when to pray and when not to, when to stand and when to kneel, when to sing, when not to sing, how to read the Bible, how to testify, how long to address a meeting, how to judge audience reaction and how to take advantage of a softening-up campaign.

Like all good officers, Major Helen, who has been fighting under the Blood and Fire flag for twenty-one years, knows most of "O and R" by heart. Its multifarious injunctions have by now become so much a part of her daily existence that she is hardly aware she is following the rules when she opens her sitting-room window from the top, eats fresh fruit and raw vegetables, wears warm underclothing, or carries a meeting from a cheerful beginning to the point where a sinner is driven to grapple with a bad conscience, and on to the grand climax where he is drawn irresistibly forward by the meeting's carefully planned emotional impact to the penitents' bar.

Visiting The Backsliders

Her combat area is the London borough of St. Marylebone, and her campaign headquarters is the Salvation Army hall in Bell Street, a few minutes' walk from the Edgware Road tube station. Here, the battles of Corps 140, which inherits the fighting tradition of General Evangeline Booth, who founded it seventy-two years ago, keep the little major on the march for sixteen hours a day, seven days a week.

She is at the hall every day supervising groups of Girl Guides, Brownies, Scouts, Wolf Cubs, a boys' band, a young people's chorus, a young people's social club, a women's group, meetings with new converts, spiritual meetings, regular Sunday services, a group of cadets taking field training, plus five weekly "open-airs." In addition, she is overseer of the corps's business affairs and she spends about three hours every day visiting the sick, the aged, the poor, the newly saved and the backsliders.

Major Helen is particular about time, and organizes every day on a rigid schedule. "Every successful Salvation Army officer works to a plan," she recently told the cadets. "You must use every moment to advantage, so you must have a plan for every moment. You must also rise early. No officer can afford late mornings" (she herself rises at 6.30 a.m.). "Your quarters

Open-air meetings are designed to make a lasting impression on all who hear. Major Helen leaves the group of singers to intercept passers-by

Another evening "open-air" in Marylebone, with Major Helen standing beside the big drum to conduct hymn singing

must be spotless, an example to all your people of true cleanliness and godliness" (her quarters are spotless).

She shares a flat, provided by the army, with Captain Margaret Drummond, her second-in-command. When, in the early morning, the two officers have finished their private devotions, they sit down together to plan the day's attack. Plans, of course, are sometimes changed by circumstances.

The Wife Who Ran Away

One morning not long ago Major Helen was awakened half an hour early by the telephone. A distressed, West-country voice pleaded for help. "My wife has left me and gone to London to live with another man," the voice said. "Please stop her." The husband described his wife, Major Helen scrambled out of bed and, with Captain Drummond at her side, hurried off to Paddington Station. The erring wife was shocked and annoyed to be met by two Salvation Army officers. But her resistance crumbled before the double-barrelled assault, and she went with the major and the captain to their flat. Here, Major Helen extracted the name and address of her lover. "She was to meet him later in the day, but before she saw him, I saw him," the major says. "I managed to convince him that he ought to stay at home with his own wife and not see this poor woman at all."

Captain Drummond, meanwhile, painted a vivid picture of suffering and moral peril for the wife. This held her until her husband arrived. "She finally decided she would come my way, although she wanted to go her own way, and we had an awful time with her," Major Helen says. "It lasted nearly two days. But between us we eventually got her home, and both families are now very happy."

If her weekend plans are not interrupted, Major Helen can usually be found in the centre of a group of Salvationists somewhere along the Edgware Road. Her clear voice can be heard ringing across the pavement to smite, she fervently hopes, the hearts of sinners with guilt and hope.

The primary purpose of the open air meeting is, if not the immediate salvation of all listeners, at least to make an impression that will last. Its subsidiary aim is to attract spectators to the hall for the indoor meeting. Major Helen's meetings usually consist of a Bible reading, hymns, a short address, several testimonies and some fervent prayer. Every officer and soldier has his eyes trained on the spectators for signs of interest. Any who display such signs are personally urged to follow the band back to the hall.

Not long ago, Major Helen was giving a lesson in the technique of the "open-air" and its succeeding meeting to the cadets. She stood in the background as the cadets took up their position. One of the cadets opened the meeting by describing, through a megaphone, the joys of religion. Major Helen meanwhile walked across the street and herded a group of giggling, teenage girls into the small circle. Another cadet was now telling the disinterested passers-by about her discovery of Christianity, while another hovered in the background with the collection-box. One cadet broke ranks from time to time to speak to spectators. After half an hour, in which they competed not only with indifference but with rain and some brisk road traffic, the cadets marched in formation, singing, back to the hall, the teenage girls and one housewife following behind.

The cadets took their places beside Major Helen on the platform. The hall, which has a capacity of about 250, is warm, bright and cheerful. On this occasion there were no more than about forty in the congregation, most of them women. There were a few middle-aged men, some young girls, one grave-looking youth sitting alone, and a happy, rough old man who was badly in need of a shave. On most of the window ledges were tambourines for Salvation Army soldiers and members of the congregation to use during the service. Just before the meeting began, some strangers peeped in at the door, and one of the cadets jumped down from the platform to welcome them and pull them in.

Message Of Happiness

The first hymn, which Major Helen played with a confident swing on her concertina, was "Boundless Salvation," written and composed by General William Booth, the army's founder. It has a simple melody, good rhythm and a message of hope and happiness. During the last verse the cadets emphasized the rhythm by clapping. After Major Helen had offered a short prayer, one of the cadets rose to lead another song. The cadets picked up tambourines and played them with some neat and attractive rhythmics involving the heel of the hand and the elbow. One cadet continued to clap in an abstracted way. It was her job to watch the door, and from time to time she peeped around the banners which flanked the pulpit to look for newcomers. Some of the congregation helped themselves to tambourines; the happy, spirited singing continued for about ten minutes.

From time to time Major Helen would rise and call out: "Come along now. You're not very convincing in those songs. Do you believe it? If you do, then SING IT." Then a cadet read the Bible lesson. By this time a change in the meeting's emotional character was noticeable. The small, attractive-looking cadet who had been watching the door rose and said she had tried the pleasures of the world and found them wanting. She appealed to those tired of worldly comfort to try the spiritual life which, she testified, was very rewarding. The last words of her testimony were a cue for the next song, "All the World Can Ne'er Console Thee."

At this point Major Helen took the stand, and the tempo was stepped up another notch. She called for a renunciation of sin and asked for testimony from the congregation. Everybody hung his head, and there was a moment of painful silence. It was broken by the corps treasurer who rose, testified briefly and provided the cue for another song. The music had now become quiet, sweet and emotionally appealing.

A Woman's Testimony

A woman in the front row, obviously affected, lowered her head to her hands. Major Helen asked for more testimony from the congregation, and when nobody said anything the cadet sergeant-major rose and told about her personal discovery of religion. Then, in a voice charged with pleading, Major Helen read the first line of the next hymn, "Give up your sin and you shall find a never failing Friend." The woman whose head was bowed stood up and testified briefly in a choked, halting voice.

Then the emotional tension was temporarily relieved by the collection-plate and another chorus from the cadets, accompanied, off-key, by the hoarse voice of the happy old man with the three-day beard. During the final hymn the sergeant-major hurried down from the platform and began talking in an urgent undertone to a man in one of the back rows. The hymn terminated the first part of the meeting, which moved imperceptibly into what is known as the after-meeting, and the major proceeded to give the cadets a demonstration of what the Salvation Army calls "fishing."

She fell to her knees, and the ardent appeal in her now soft voice plucked still more strongly at the already extruded emotions of the congregation. She urged sinners to come forward. She invited soldiers who had already been saved to kneel at the penitents' bar and rededicate themselves, interspersing her appeals with prayers for a softening of hearts. One of the teenage girls who had joined the open air meeting suddenly came forward and knelt with bowed head at the bar, an inverted wooden bench in front of the platform. Immediately, Captain Margaret Drummond knelt beside the girl with an arm around her waist.

In a few moments another young girl came forward, and this time a cadet stepped down from the platform to join her at the penitents' bar. The sergeant-major tiptoed back to the platform, and the man she had been talking to

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JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM KEMP

With Tony Bryant, his assistant, William Baxter (left) plans ways of attracting more visitors. Everyone in Harrogate, from mayor to station porters, knows him as Bill

The town that lives on talk

by KEITH ELLIS

Conferences mean money to Harrogate, the spa which residents "sell" to delegates—and their wives—for £250,000 a year

FOR THE SMALL SUM of 12s. 6d., visitors to Harrogate's Royal Baths have long been able to enjoy an electrical treatment known as Harrogate Hot Air. Today, however, most visitors bring their own hot air instead. For though Harrogate remains an important spa, its prosperity is now based on conferences, of which it claims to attract more than any other town in Great Britain.

"After the war," says William Baxter, Harrogate's forty-eight year old publicity manager, "we had to reorientate our ideas. Nowadays, no one can afford the disorders Harrogate was famous for treating. They were caused purely by high living." The reorientation has proved successful. Though Harrogate never attracted more than thirty conferences before the war, the number jumped from thirty-six in 1946 to 110 in 1951. More than seventy have already been booked for 1952, and Baxter expects the 1951 record to be broken.

The realization that conferences mean money has spread quickly through the community. Taxi-drivers soon understood when they got pound-note tips from the American delegates to the Soroptimist conference. So did the storekeeper who sold a delegate's wife a fur coat costing 1,400 guineas. A jeweller told Baxter: "I never charge delegates for watch-straps and minor repairs. It's bread on the waters. They always come back for presents."

Mack Cameron, the manager of a local chain store, says that delegates' wives tend to buy the extras that at home they would probably do without. Also, social competition among delegates stimulates "snob" buying. "But it's unpredictable," he says. "We've made up to £1,000 extra from one conference in three days. With another conference, three times the size, we've had no increase at all. What is important," he adds, "is that they bring employment. They leave behind money which local people come to spend." Baxter calculates that in 1951 the amount left behind was at least a quarter of a million pounds.

The point was brought home to Cameron when he was canvassing for the local elections in a working-class pocket of an exclusive residential area. "I want more conferences," said the owner of a fish and chip shop. Cameron was surprised. "I don't see how they affect you," he said. "Oh yes, they do," said the man. "The hotels take on extra workers at nights. When they come home they've money in their pockets, and they often spend it on a fish supper. Conferences make a big difference to me."

Though Harrogate, like any other town, has its factions and jealousies, all agree that Baxter is eminently successful in coaxing visitors to the town. "Bill Baxter's bald pate," remarked Cameron jokingly, "is one of the sights of Harrogate." Besides a bald pate, Baxter has a soft Yorkshire voice, black-rimmed spectacles and a taste for dark suits and quiet ties. Everyone from the mayor to the railway porters knows him as Bill.

Perhaps his greatest asset is his quietly persuasive way of putting what is, by any account, a good case. Harrogate, he explains, is ideally situated for conferences. It is 200 miles from London, 200 from Edinburgh and 198 from Glasgow. It has an excellent train service—including three Pullmans—is nine miles off the Great North Road and a mere twelve miles from Yeadon Airport. The thirty-five hotels have more than 4,000 beds, and there are four meeting halls, the largest of them, the Royal Hall, seating 1,350. "The only conferences we can't accommodate are the big political parties and the T.U.C."

The Mayor Fell Asleep

Thus, Baxter's biggest conferences, such as the National Chamber of Trade, held this year from April 26 to May 1, the Institute of Personnel Management and the Cotton Board, normally have between 1,200 and 1,500 delegates. For the Inner Wheel's 2,000, speeches had to be relayed from the Royal Hall to an overflow meeting in the Lounge Hall across the road. "We *did* take the Royal Sanitary Institute, which had 3,200 delegates," says Baxter, "but they met in three sections."

The mayor attends the opening sessions of most conferences to make the delegates a speech of welcome, after which he leaves the platform and allows the chairman to carry on with his opening remarks. On one occasion, the chairman rushed into his speech so suddenly that the mayor had to remain on the platform. After a session which grew steadily more embarrassing, the organizer approached Baxter and said: "We don't mind your mayor falling asleep, old man, but we *do* object when he snores."

Organizations for which Baxter has arranged accommodation range from the Licensed Victuallers to the Women's Total Abstinence League. They include the Bartenders' Guild, the British Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, the Bronze and Brass Founders and the Men of the Trees. "Every year the Toy Fair turns Harrogate into a Leipzig." At the first antique dealers' fair, now also an annual fixture, a quarter of a million pounds worth of goods were exhibited and, on the first day, £60,000 changed hands.

Men Would Not Dance

One of the trickiest weeks was in Easter, 1950, when the National Association of Schoolmasters, for the first time in its history, held its annual conference at the same place and time as the National Union of Women Teachers. The N.U.W.T. is renowned for its feminism, the N.A.S. for its jealous assertion of male rights. Tremblingly, Baxter suggested a joint dance. The women agreed, but the men firmly refused.

Baxter believes that much of Harrogate's success is due to the way in which everyone co-operates to "sell" the town to visitors. A columnist in a local newspaper complained that Harrogate had no mass-produced head-scarf depicting local scenes. Why had this excellent means of publicity been neglected? The answer came within the week. It was a

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Simon, conducting, sensed the tension in the audience. His baton trembled uncontrollably as the first player rose and began to leave the stage

Farewell Symphony

by GEORGE BRADSHAW

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

No matter how the prison camp orchestra performed, the applause was bound to be deafening. It had to be—an audacious escape plan depended on it

THE IRONIC STORY of Simon Taylor was told to me by Alex Burton, a man who knew him very well. Alex is a barrister, but during the war he was an intelligence officer in the R.A.F. It was in the course of that useful but—as he always claimed—routine and uninspiring work that he first met and became friendly with Simon Taylor. . . .

Simon Taylor (said Alex) was a navigator with our Lancaster group. He was a slight fellow, quiet and rather good looking, with dark brown hair. The thing I remember about him is that while he had no more opportunity to take care of his clothes than anyone else, he never looked as rumpled as the rest of us did. He was congenitally neat.

What attracted me to him was the fact that he had a little prewar conversation left over. Most of our chaps, while they were the best fellows in the world, had, literally, only one thing to talk about. While it is an inexhaustible topic, still I am old enough to like variety.

Simon was twenty-eight, no child. He was a musician. Oddly enough, a number of navigators were musicians, or perhaps it isn't odd; musicians are always good mathematicians; it follows.

By his own admission, Simon was not a great musician. "I can play almost any instrument you can name," he told me, "but none of them quite at concert level." By that, however, do not suppose that he was a dilettante. He had no other interest in life, and he had had years of hard training.

"The fact that I did not specialize was not purely chance," he said, "because for as long as I can remember, I've wanted to be one thing—a conductor."

That's an ambition you don't run into often—conducting a symphony orchestra. I am by no means an habitué of the concert halls, but I go often enough to be acquainted with the spectacle, and in my innocence I had imagined that those motions a conductor makes, the sawing movements, the outstretched arms, the finger to the lips and so on, are purely personal, or even—to watch some of them—haphazard, but that is not the case. Each wave of the hand has a meaning which is intelligible to the players watching.

Well, Simon had been through all the training. "And fortunately I have the knack," he said, "of remembering scores. I need to read through a symphony or a concerto only half a dozen times and I have it for ever, in my head. It would be a great convenience."

Would be, in the conditional future, for of course Simon was not conducting any symphony orchestra. There are none to conduct, Simon explained to me, for it is a fact that orchestra leaders never die. They grow older and older and older, but they do not die. I exaggerate slightly, but not much.

Simon had a job before the war as music librarian for a provincial symphony orchestra. It was not a splendid job, I take it, but it fed him, and kept him near what he wanted to do, and also gave him an opportunity to read a lot of music. Old Wurdman, the conductor, was civil to him but no more than that. I mean he

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THE MIGHTY BALCON (3) *. . . As disaster turned quickly to glittering success, Sir Michael Balcon was swept into the fantastic world of Louis B. Mayer. Then came the greatest gamble of his astonishing career—daring to buck the biggest man in Hollywood*

It was cold war in the film world

by LAWRENCE EARL

Film that brought the fight out into the open: Balcon (left) confers with director Jack Conway and Robert Taylor, the star, during the making of *A Yank At Oxford*

Man who kept his eye on Balcon: Louis B. Mayer, between Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, shares a joke with Busby Berkeley, one of his directors, on a Hollywood set

THAT MID-JANUARY DAY in 1930 when a fire roared through his Islington studios, gutted the building, and destroyed £50,000 in shining new sound equipment, Michael Balcon was stunned. "Mick was a dapper young man who always carried a rolled umbrella and wore a bowler hat," an associate at Islington recalls, but for a few hours after the fire Balcon looked more like a man trying to outstare disaster. Then, squaring his shoulders, he decided to tot up his remaining assets instead of brooding over his loss.

He learned at once that the cameras had been rescued from the flames and that the film vaults, with their valuable contents, had withstood the intense heat. This, at least, was a starting point. Then, from an industry reputed to be both hard-boiled and cut-throat, came quick offers of help. Every studio in Britain, it seemed, was anxious to assist Balcon to bridge the calamity. Soon his current work was transferred to Elstree.

He had barely organized his thinking to a point where he realized he would have to start again at the bottom, when the Ostrer brothers—who had identified themselves with large-scale finance in the industry—approached him. "Will you sell Gainsborough and what remains of Islington?" they asked. "And, if you do, will you remain in charge of production there and take on the new Gaumont-British studios at Shepherds Bush as well?" Of course, Balcon said he would. This eventually meant he had to supervise the making of up to twenty-five films a year, a colossal task which put his rate of production higher than that of any other film man in Europe, and possibly the world.

The Balcon Discoveries

Soon he was to have many famous stars under contract, including Madeleine Carroll, Jessie Matthews, Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge, Leslie Henson, Gordon Harker and George Arliss. Balcon is himself credited with having discovered the first four for the screen.

He made an astonishing run of well-received films during this time: *Hindle Wakes*, with Sybil Thorndike; *Journey's End*, with Anthony Bushell, Colin Clive and Ian MacLaren; *The Ghost Train*, starring Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge, his old friends from the days of Ivor Novello's Fifty-Fifty Club; and many others. As quickly, it seems in retrospect, as the flip of a coin, Balcon had again turned dark failure into glittering success.

But it had not been easy. His first problem was to fix the faults at the Shepherds Bush studios, which had been inadequately sound-proofed in the rush to switch from silent pictures to talkies. He found, also, that the output planned at the two studios was beyond their capacity, not because of space limitations but because there were not enough first-class technicians available in Britain. Balcon started to import experts on a grand scale from Europe and America. He brought into the country such people as Gunther Krampf and Glen MacWilliams, both famous cameramen; he brought art editors, make-up men, wigmakers, cutters.

"He did not do this with the idea of using foreigners to the exclusion of Britons," a friend emphasized in recalling this plan, "but to use them for training our own people. Many of our experts today owe those Germans and Americans a great debt. The industry owes Mick a great deal, too, for bringing them in."

By this time, Balcon had his production rolling

Jessie Matthews, the girl Balcon called his greatest artist, studies a 1937 film script with cameraman Glen MacWilliams (left) and Sonnie Hale, then her husband

Renate Müller in *Sunshine Susie*, with Owen Nares. Rumour linked her name with Hitler's

along, but the strain of this task, together with the upsets of the past couple of years, had not simply scratched past him at skin depth. Suddenly, without apparent warning, he disappeared from the studios. *Where was he?* his associates asked. *What had happened?* Soon a rumour began to fly around that he was terribly ill. Then a colleague whispered: "Mick will never be the same again. He's through with pictures." In fact, Balcon was writhing in the dark and lonely pit of a nervous breakdown, and the unkind whispers might easily have proved true if it had not been for his wife. He was beset by a horrible fear of himself and of the world, a fear which might have endured. It is to Aileen's courage and her belief in him that Balcon credits his recovery.

"That nervous breakdown was the most critical period of my life," he admitted recently. "I could easily have gone under. I had completely lost confidence in myself." For some weeks, he clung to the comfort of a darkened room, insisting on Aileen's company because he would not be alone and could face no one else. Presently, his wife saw that this was not good enough. She began slipping away and leaving him alone. He protested. "I have to do it," she told him. "You must regain your self-confidence. It's important that you get back to the studios before someone else steps into your shoes."

Facing The World Again

This veiled reminder of the battle for existence in the outside world made Balcon begin to fight back, but he was convinced that there was something organically wrong with him. This fear retarded his progress. Aileen saw that she would have to clear his mind of it. One by one they made the rounds of every kind of Harley Street specialist. She proved, in this painstaking way, that there was nothing wrong with his heart, his lungs, his brain. Soon, by a process of elimination, he was convinced that he had no physical disorder and that the responsibility for his recovery belonged only to himself. Gradually, this approach brought him closer to his normal self until, one day, he resolved to meet the world again. After thirteen weeks under a nurse's care, he returned to work and began some of the busiest and most productive years of his life.

It was about this time that Balcon heard of a light-hearted musical which had been made in Germany, and he bought the rights to re-make it in English. He sent for Renate Müller, the German star of the original version, and went to work on *Sunshine Susie*, which was to become one of his biggest money-earners and one of the most delightful musicals of all time.

During the making of this film, the Balcons became firm friends with Fräulein Müller, and when she was sent to hospital with peritonitis, and confessed that she had no near relatives, Mick signed the papers for her operation as "next-of-kin." Renate was a gay and freshly lovely girl, but her own life story lacked the light-heartedness of her films. She had fallen deeply in love with a German-Jewish banker. "I love him so much that I'd rather kill him than not have him," she once told Aileen.

When Hitler came to power in Germany, Fräulein Müller's story was cruelly twisted into tragedy. "I used to hear from Renate regularly after she went back," Lady Balcon told a friend recently. "Then nasty rumours kept coming out of Germany about her being Hitler's girl friend. I didn't believe them then, and I don't now. If she had anything to do with Hitler at all it was to save her sweetheart; to get him safely out of the country. He did get out. The next thing I heard of Renate was when I read in a newspaper that she had committed suicide."

Conrad Veidt, with his wife. Balcon made him a world star almost overnight

Balcon, of course, severed all his connections with the studios in Berlin when Hitler took over in Germany. He brought Conrad Veidt, then well known only in his own country, to England to play the part of a thwarted German officer in *I Was a Spy*. During the planning of this film, Balcon was paid a surprise visit by an attaché of the German Embassy. "Do you think that it is proper," the diplomat asked him stiffly, "to present a German in such a bad light?"

"You have no jurisdiction over us in England," Balcon retorted angrily. He asked the German to leave. His visitor did so, but that was not the end of the story.

Veidt's Mystery Illness

Veidt scored a great personal success in *I Was a Spy*. He became an international star practically overnight, and Balcon signed him up to make more films. But, between assignments, Veidt returned to Germany. While there, he married Lilli Praager, who was, as Balcon put it, "obviously non-Aryan." Meanwhile, Balcon planned to star Veidt in *Jew Süss*; but when the time came for Veidt to fulfil his contract, he sent a letter explaining that he was suffering from gallstones and could not come. Further letters, in which the German star was extraordinarily vague about his illness, aroused Balcon's suspicions. As a result, he sent a British doctor to Germany to examine Veidt. X-rays failed to reveal gallstones, and this wiped out any excuse for further delay. Veidt came to England with his wife.

It was not until then that Balcon learned from Veidt the truth behind his letters: he had been forced to write them by the German authorities, who were against his making *Jew Süss*. This was early in the Hitler régime, before the Nazis had really begun to test their strength, and there is little doubt that if the same events had occurred later Veidt would not have been allowed to leave his own country. As it was, he never returned to Germany. He and Balcon

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My Beloved Son

by ***ARTHUR TREVENNING HARRIS***

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

Piliso had imagined a joyful homecoming. Instead he found tragedy—his wife and son condemned to death

PILISO'S BLACK SKIN GLISTENED in the rising African sun. He leaned forward in the buggy, and his eyes rested fondly on the two beautiful white horses as they trotted briskly south from Kimberley towards his home near the Great Fish River.

He thought of the previous day—his last as a labourer at the De Beers diamond mine. It had been dinner-time when the wonderful thing had come to pass: his miraculous discovery of the glittering stone in the dust—one of the fire stones for which the white men hunted so feverishly in this same blue rock.

Piliso, driving lazily along now, chuckled. He remembered how amused the white lords had

The boy's limp body was strapped tightly to the wheel. Crying out as she saw what was happening, Nombie struggled to rise. But Piliso, at her side, gently restrained her

been when he had said that, as part of his reward for turning over the stone, he yearned for a Cape cart drawn by two white horses. Well, here were buggy and white horses! They were his! And in the canvas bag, around which he had bundled his clothing, there was much silver—enough to buy land and cattle.

He thought then of his first sight of the white horses, hitched to a post in front of the De Beers administration building. Because he had wanted horses such as these for so long, tears had filled his eyes, and it had seemed that the horses were flying, flying! Indeed, they had looked like two enormous *amatechana*, great white herons, with spread wings, flapping up from their swampy feeding grounds near the river below his home. Therefore, he had called the one 'Ntechana, White Heron, and the other, because it cropped at a tick on its flank, Bebelé, after the cattle egret. 'Ntechana and Bebelé—the two most beautiful horses in the world! Piliso's eyes glowed now while he gazed in admiration at their sleek rumps, their long manes, their erect ears. When Nombie, his wife, saw them. . . .

Thinking of Nombie made him remember also his little son, 'Ndlambe. Ah! 'Ndlambe must be a big boy of almost five years now! Piliso chuckled, thinking particularly of one never-to-be-forgotten day—the day little 'Ndlambe had been lost. Frantically, he and Nombie had searched for the child everywhere, even in the distant cattle kraal, in dread that they would find a mangled body under the hooves or impaled on the horns of the vicious bull. Lo, the sad dinner, when Nombie and he had sat on the floor trying to eat the deliciously cooked entrails of the bushbuck and the tender ears of mealies, roasted just right on live coals. And then the thin wail coming, seemingly, from beneath them! He remembered Nombie's quick wit to think immediately of the corn pit. She had screamed to him to throw aside their sleeping-mat and move the stone that covered the entrance to the pit. And then—lo, the joy! For little 'Ndlambe, his legs buried to chubby knees in yellow mealies, stood blinking up at them like a wise old bush owl, crying for his mother: *"Weh, mameh! Weh, mameh!"*

That corn pit! Piliso grinned, remembering the jibes of his friends. A corn pit under one's own hut? That was unheard of, and therefore amusing. Yet it had been a comfort to know that his own harvest was in the large chamber beneath their bodies as he and Nombie slept.

THE sun was getting to be very hot now, stinging Piliso's bare back, and foaming sweat gathered under the harness on the flanks of 'Ntechana and Bebelé.

And then an unpleasant memory intruded itself and made Piliso want to hurry home. He had remembered the letter he had received from Nombie the day before he had found the big fire stone. There had been trouble in the neighbouring village—so reported the friend who read it to him. The Chief Tschakana's young son had died from a mysterious malady of the throat. Truly, it was a bewitching! And the chief had felt disposed to call on the feared *anuse*, Kreli, the witch-doctor, to "smell out" the sorcerer, who would be tortured into a confession and the surrender of his propefty—or suffer death. The news frightened Piliso, for "smelling-outs," like bolts of lightning, could strike anywhere.

Piliso yearned to be home, and he slapped the reins on the horses' backs so that their ambling gait quickened.

It was a long trek—almost 500 miles—to Piliso's village near the precipice above the Great Fish River, and many days were consumed before he approached the last rise beyond which were home and wife and son.

To lengthen the approaching happiness, Piliso closed his eyes and reined the horses to a walk. In his mind he saw the tribal village, the road snaking through to the edge of the precipice, the sluggish river beyond and far below. The well-remembered noon breeze began to blow comfortably on him. He knew that he was over the hump, that the village was in sight below, and he drew rein.

'Ntechana and Bebelé stamped and snorted in growing impatience. They sensed somehow that home was near.

Piliso knew that there would be smoke coming from the door and sifting through the thatch roof of his hut. Nombie would be cooking dinner now. And little 'Ndlambe would be playing in the yard, or perhaps climbing the branches of the great *baareboon* tree, leafless at this season but scarlet with its flamboyant blossoms. Beyond would be the huts of relatives and friends, and, in the centre of the village, the great hut of the petty-chief, Kama, Nombie's father.

Straining his ears now, Piliso could actually hear the distant baa-ing of hungry calves penned in the small side-kraal, anxious for their mothers to return from grazing.

Unable longer to bear the sweet suspense, Piliso opened his eyes. Yes, there they were—the cattle kraal, the village of huts, the tree covered with a mist of scarlet, everything. Everything except. . . .

Piliso wiped his eyes, the better to see the part of the village where his own hut was located; but, curiously, his own hut seemed to have dissolved into smoke and ashes; it had become a barrenness amid the spattering of huts. He looked again, searching carefully. All the other huts stood, his alone was gone!

Children, naked or clad in ragged loin-cloths, stared vacantly at some frightening sight. Men in brief, shabby garments moved listlessly along the winding lanes. Women in ochre-red skirts, with blankets over their glistening shoulders, or wearing blouses, or with breasts exposed, stood in sluggish groups.

Something terrible had descended upon his village to destroy its good cheer, its perennial joy. And the something had centred itself in the vicinity of Piliso's own hut.

A deep rumble stirred in Piliso's breast. His hands clenched, the one over the reins, the other over the whipstock.

For the first time, he beat the white horses, and they galloped madly down the rough road. Whip in hand, Piliso fixed his eyes on the smouldering ruins of his home, his life. Nombie! 'Ndlambe! What of them?

The terrified horses threatened to gallop through the village, on the road that went to the edge of the precipice. Piliso stood up and leaned back on the reins, the muscles of his arms knotting.

WITHIN half the distance of an assegai's flight from his destroyed home, 'Ntechana and Bebelé came to such an abrupt stop that Piliso was catapulted out of the buggy.

Men, women and children, suddenly becoming alert, ran towards Piliso, who searched the gathering for Nombie's father. When the crowd opened to let the petty-chief, Kama, through, Piliso knelt before him. "Father!" he cried. "My wife—my son. . . ." He pointed towards the desolation that had been his home. "Where are they?"

Kama beat his chest. "It was the smelling-out of a sorcerer!" His voice was husky, his face numbed with despair.

"A—smelling-out?" Etched before Piliso's eyes was a terrifying picture: the cruel eyes of the *anuse*, Kreli.

"There has been much evil in our neighbourhood, my son." Kama bowed his grizzled head. "The only son of Chief Tschakana, our good friend, died a month ago. Since then, others have sickened and died, and the admitted powers of the *anuse*, Kreli, have been of no avail in curbing the epidemic, good witch-doctor though he is. So the *anuse* called for a smelling-out, to find the sorcerer and then to make the right medicines from his charred bones."

"So Nombie wrote me—about the forthcoming smelling-out."

"Wo!" Kama, in his agony, tore at his greying hair. "Therein lay the trouble, for the one

who wrote the letter for Nombie repeated her messages to one close to the *anuse*, Kreli, making Nombie an object of his attention—and so. . . ." He raised open, empty hands.

Piliso was sorely afraid. "Tell me, Father, what did the *anuse* do—besides burning my hut?"

"This very day the *anuse*, Kreli, came to our village with his pouch of bones—bones of the antelope for speed, of the monkey for guile, of the snake for treachery, of the milk-cow for docility, and many others. Before your hut he threw the bones, and those of the snake and the monkey pointed towards your hut. Thus was he assured that Nombie was the snake and 'Ndlambe the monkey—both guilty of sorcery. The *anuse* prescribed death by burning as the only way to pacify the outraged gods."

"Death?" Piliso turned towards the ashes and the smoke of his hut.

"Yes, the *anuse* fastened the door on them. With a torch he fired the thatch in many places." Kama beat his chest at the memory. "The little one screamed once. Then all was quiet but for the roar and crackle of the flames."

Piliso fell to the ground and sobbed.

In the stirring of the noon-hour breeze, he heard only Nombie's voice, her whispering in his ear. How could the *anuse* destroy Nombie when she was so full of wisdom? Nombie would have found a way to save both the child and herself!

Suddenly, Piliso sucked in a deep breath. "The corn pit!" he cried, his voice high-pitched and quavering with excitement. Beneath those ashes there was a slab-covered vault, only partly filled with grain! "The corn pit beneath my hut! It could be that Nombie in her wisdom. . . ." He rushed to the spot.

KAMA, tersely and without palaver, sent excited villagers for besom brooms, for branches of trees, for old rush mats, to sweep aside the ashes.

Impatiently, Piliso tossed aside smouldering poles. With calloused fingers he clawed at the rough edges of the stone that covered the pit. He raised one rim and then, heaving the slab as if it had been a thin wafer, flung it aside. On his knees, he peered downwards. The old ladder, its upper rung charred, was still there. A streak of sunlight played on the top of the golden grain, and half-buried in the corn he saw two figures, those of a woman and a child. He slid down the ladder into the poisoned air, hot and dank and stifling. He turned the body of his wife. He shook her, calling her name frantically, raising shrill echoes in the confines of the vault. But Nombie did not respond. Her body was limp.

The foul, overheated air made him dizzy and faint—he must get her above quickly. He heaved Nombie over one shoulder. Swaying as he climbed, gasping greedily for the good upper air, he mounted the ladder.

Willing hands took the woman from him. He inhaled hungrily, so that memory, which had begun to swim around inside his head, returned clearly. 'Ndlambe was still below!

The top rung snapped underneath him, and Piliso dropped down knee-deep into the grain. Shooting stars burst from his eyes. Stabs of pain split his head. He bent, groping blindly for the small body of his son. He found it: it was soft and warm, but frighteningly still. With 'Ndlambe in his arms, he felt for the ladder. Weights anchored his feet, his breath whistled in his chest.

Above, he refused to release 'Ndlambe to eager hands. He clung desperately to the child, muttering unintelligible words. He staggered to the shade of the spreading *baareboon* tree, and laid the child down beside the mother. And then, weeping uncontrollably, he stood staring at the two pathetic bodies.

Moving in from the fringe of the crowd came an old, old man, stoop-shouldered and thin and toothless. Though it was a warm day, he held a blanket snugly around wizened shoulders.

Piliso knew this man as one very wise in the ways of life and death. "Wise old one!" he shouted. "You who once were *is-anuse*, can you not cast a spell more powerful than that of the *anuse*, Kreli? Bring back into my loved ones, I beg of you, the spirit of life!"

The old man stooped with difficulty to feel the still bodies. "These two are not yet gone to the land of the spirits! They teeter at the brink."

He threw aside his blanket, standing naked but for a ragged loincloth. "Do this as I say. If these two be slung up by their feet to a bowed branch, and if their backs be belaboured with flat sticks, then will they live again. . . ."

Almost before he had finished speaking, villagers had run off for rawhide thongs. Slip-knots were thrown around the ankles of the unconscious woman and child. The thongs were

THE HAPPY HUNTED

Exciting real-life adventures of Brigadier George Clifton

JOHN BULL is to publish another outstanding real-life adventure story in the tradition of such notable past successes as *Stolen Journey*, *The Dam Busters* and *The Naked Island*.

The book is called *The Happy Hunted*. The author is Brigadier George Clifton, D.S.O., M.C., the New Zealand General who was captured in the Western Desert and imprisoned in Italy and Germany.

From the moment of capture, his one aim was to escape. He made nine attempts in all—twice almost gaining sight of freedom and once being severely shot up for his pains.

In a foreword to *The Happy Hunted*, General Lord Freyberg, V.C., writes: "Clifton was cut out for a life of adventure. An undaunted soldier, his stories of escape have seldom been equalled."

Starting in the May 17 issue, "The Happy Hunted" will be serialized exclusively in John Bull

lobbed over the horizontal branch of the *baareboon* tree, and the two bodies were hoisted feet first until they swung like butchered beasts. Scarlet blossoms rained down from the shaken branches to make a ground carpet the colour of freshly spilled blood.

Men with flat planks thwacked the bare backs of the woman and the child.

"Harder! Harder!" cried the old man, gesticulating, and, reluctantly, they beat harder. But those whacking the child held back the force of their blows, for had they not children of their own? But on the woman, one husband (troubled by his own wife) did much good. Nombie, her face twitching as she began to feel the pain of the blows, made harsh sounds, and gasped in great breaths of air.

THE old man held up a gnarled hand. "Enough! Enough! The woman has back within her the spirit of life! Cut her down!"

"But—'Ndlambe!" cried Piliso. "The child——"

"When the flail works, it works. When it fails, it fails!"

Piliso held Nombie in his arms, while he moaned: "My wife is returned, but our fruit is gone."

"Hold!" The old one held up an imperative hand. "Cut the child down! There is yet another way—the wheel!" He looked in the direction of the buggy. "Spread the child against the wheel. Tie wrists and ankles to spokes, middle to the hub so that he does not slide. When the wheel turns rapidly, then will the spirit return to his body!"

While the boy was tied to the wheel, Nombie's eyes flickered and opened. As she saw what was being done to the child, she cried out and tried to get up. Piliso restrained her struggling body. "Courage, my wife! If the gods be with us, our son shall regain his lost spirit. . . ."

"Mount for the road!" The tying finished, the old man shouted the order, a loud sound in the general hush of fear.

One of the villagers put foot on the iron step and mounted the seat. The youth at the horses' heads turned loose the bridles and stepped aside.

"*Hamba!*" The driver slapped the reins, and 'Ntechana and Bebelé broke into a canter which he reined to a brisk trot. With all eyes following, the driver made a wide circle and came swiftly back towards the starting point.

The old man held up a hand for the driver to stop, and moved to little 'Ndlambe's side. He put his mouth close to the child's lips. Then, nodding gravely, he straightened, beckoning the parents, huddled together in hope and in fear.

"The spirit of your son has been drawn back into his small body. It is indeed well!" He turned to a young man. "Cut the thongs and give the child to his grandfather."

Kama stepped briskly forward. He took the child in his arms, and murmured crooning, calming words. Then he gave 'Ndlambe to Nombie. "Daughter, your son is restored to you! Praise be to the spirits of my father's fathers, that they should so graciously set free his small hand and return him to us!"

LITTLE 'Ndlambe's face puckered, then a shrill cry came from his mouth. He clutched weakly at his mother, catching up in his little fists handfuls of the flesh of her arm and of her breast.

"*Weh, mameh! Weh, mameh!*" he moaned.

"*Mameh* holds you, little one, and all is well!" Nombie was enjoying beyond words the pain of small fingers digging into her flesh. "Look! Your father has returned! This is he, and his quick thought and great love saved us!"

"He lives! The child lives!" Men, women and children clapped joyful hands and chanted merrily, for a great miracle had visited their village. The dead had risen again! It would be remembered and told for many generations.

Then Piliso, the eager father, took the child from Nombie; but 'Ndlambe, not remembering this strange and impetuous man, struggled to return to Nombie's soft bosom.

"*Weh, mameh! Weh, mameh!*" he cried again, but now he glanced out of the corners of his swollen eyes at Piliso.

All the men laughed at Piliso, the forgotten man. But Piliso merely chuckled softly. He was very happy. Nombie had told their child that he, the father, had quick thought and had saved them! His loving hands caressed the frightened child's head.

Then Kama spoke again. "This surely is a miracle. It is plain the bones spoke falsely against the house of Piliso. But to appease the spirits, it is right that the *anuse*, Kreli, be given medicine money. Can you do this, my son?"

Piliso looked at his wife and son, at his beautiful white horses and the buggy, at his burnt house, and he laughed aloud with pure joy.

"The *anuse* shall have medicine money. I shall build a new house, buy much land. You see my buggy?"

"Yes, my son." Kama looked puzzled. "You would sell the buggy?"

Again Piliso laughed. "I will sell nothing. In the buggy I have silver—more silver than the village has ever seen. Gather round, all my friends. I tell the story." THE END

Part of Percy Young's job is to erect the goalposts the day before the Final

On "the day," Young always takes a last-minute view of the pitch from a high-up spot like this. Then he retires to his cubby hole under the east stand, coming out only at half-time

Cup Final Groundsman

by WILFRED GREATOREX

Percy Young spends seven months getting the turf ready for Wembley's biggest event. Yet he has never watched a Cup Final

SHORTLY BEFORE THE GATES of Wembley Stadium were opened to the 100,000 people who saw the 1950 Cup Final, a group of Football Association high-ups and club representatives assembled for a preview of the velvety playing pitch which has been romantically called "sacred" by successive generations of sports writers and footballers.

Suddenly, one member of the party noticed, high on the steep west terracing, a lone figure leaning on a crush barrier. "How the devil did *he* manage to get in?" asked the important visitor good-humouredly. There was momentary consternation, and an assistant was sent to make inquiries. The mystery was soon cleared up by a Wembley official, who identified the solitary spectator in the battered trilby and sleeveless leather jerkin. "It's all right," he explained. "It's Percy having a last look before his perfect pitch gets messed up."

As Wembley's head groundsman, Percy Young spends about seven months of every year actively preparing for the greatest event in Britain's sporting calendar. After countless hours of sowing, mowing, spiking, rolling and harrowing, he and the eight men under him annually present the twenty-two Cup Finalists with what, through popular legend and rare experience, has come to be known as the ideal playing surface.

A no-nonsense Liverpudlian with a brush moustache, ruddy cheeks and a hard-headed detachment from sporting excitements, Young is apt to scorn extravagant descriptions of his plot. "The way they talk," he says, "you'd think the pitch looked after itself and needed no human assistance." In fact, Young has to protect his precious rectangle of fine, hard-wearing turf from weeds, diseases, pests and extremes of weather—an unending task which involves a variety of tools ranging from motor mowers to overhead sprays, aerating apparatus, and weighted brushes hauled by two-man teams. He is increasingly helped by science, and keeps track through specialist publications and catalogues of the latest fertilizers, weedkillers and chemical controls against fungi and insects.

Twice a year, "plugs" of Wembley turf are sent to the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, Yorkshire, for analysis. They are examined by plant pathologists for strength, freedom from disease, and soil acidity; and Young is told whether the balance of mineral salts needs adjusting. "I often wonder," says Young, "whether I'm a good, old-fashioned nurseryman or a science student. If I live till I'm ninety I'll still be learning this job."

If It *Must* Rain . . .

Ideally, he likes a week of fine weather before the big game. "Needless to say," he says, "I rarely get it, and I compromise by hoping that the rain will fall at night." Under reasonable conditions he can get the right pile on the pitch, mowers operate more efficiently, and the regulation white lines that can mean all the difference between a free kick and a penalty are easier to paint in.

Not long ago, Young had to re-mark the ground with hockey lines for the women's international between England and Scotland. He began on the Thursday morning. "It started raining," he recalls, "and poured continuously until the Saturday." The lines were twice washed out. He went to the ground earlier than usual on the day of the match and started all over again. By the time he finished, an hour before the bully-off, he had changed his saturated clothes five times. "Fortunately," he recalls, "the third coat of whitening held."

Young has an encyclopaedic knowledge of ground requirements for every outdoor game, and regularly marks out Wembley for sports as diverse as speedway racing and pole-vaulting. He also has to prepare for hockey, rugby, track events, greyhound racing, the high and long jumps, putting the weight and lacrosse, and even, on rarer occasions, for youth festivals and religious rallies.

His year runs from October to October. In that month, the speedway season ends, and Young and his assistants reclaim two parallel strips of soccer space running the length of the pitch and beyond, several yards deep. To do this, they lay (by hand) 15,000 turves, each eighteen by twelve inches, and then re-seed. At present-day prices, the re-seeding of a football ground can cost between £120 and £250.

On the morning of the Cup Final, Young is at work by seven o'clock. Ahead are five hours of at times feverish preparation: nets are attached to the goalposts that have been rigged the day before, corner flags placed, white lines inspected, and the whole pitch checked. Once he is satisfied, Young ascends to one of the top terraces to get a spectator's-eye view. "It looks very different from up there," he says.

Last year, Young was kept so busy on the Saturday morning that he had no time for his usual remote inspection. "I don't often go to the cinema," he says, "but I went the following Monday, to see how the ground looked before it was played on."

He also saw more of the game than he did at Wembley; for, in accordance with his annual

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practice, he retired to his concrete cubby-hole under the east stand after the kick-off, only coming out for a few minutes at half-time to see whether anything needed attention.

"Why should people be surprised that I have never seen a Cup Final?" he asks. "I can do nothing once the players are on the field." In fact, the rest he gets while the game is on is handy, for before him is the busiest weekend of the year. As soon as this year's Final is over, Young and his men will go over the ground, dismantling goalposts, taking away corner flags and nets, and installing dog racing gear for the evening meeting.

Next morning, part of the pitch is taken up to make room for a speedway track. This is re-laid with 400 tons of ashes, decomposed concrete and shale, which gets so churned up during racing that it takes hours to level it.

Sees Turf Ripped Up

The sport that bothers Young most, however, is rugby. "You get used to seeing your ground cut and torn," he says, "and, after all, that's what a groundsman must be prepared for. But it does give you a queer feeling to watch lumps ripped out of a surface you've spent months cultivating."

During the early minutes of one recent Rugby League Cup Final, Young stood with a group of officials and stadium staff near the tunnel from which the players appear. "Heavy marks were soon showing all over the place," says a colleague. "Percy calmly watched the scrums and flying tackles. But when a player taking a free kick back-heeled a deep groove in the ground to keep the oval ball upright, Percy quietly left."

He has few dealings with players, though he is introduced each year to the Final teams when they inspect the pitch three or four days before the game. It amuses him to see parties dabbing thoughtfully at the turf with the toes of their shoes, and sometimes pressing it with outstretched hands.

"They always look very expert about it," he says. "I can understand footballers sensing the yield of the ground just before playing on it, but what they, and more especially the people with them, can learn three days before the match, I don't know. I suspect many of them don't know themselves."

Percy Young was born a nurseryman. "Almost as soon as I could walk," he recalls, "I did my first job as a groundsman—weeding a patch of my father's nursery." A family concern founded by his grandfather, the nursery held contracts for work on school and club sports grounds and the Grand National course at Aintree.

After some years' experience, in which he helped to re-lay the Aintree course, Young became head gardener to a wealthy Liverpool tobacco magnate, and stayed there nine years until he was appointed to look after the sunbathing gardens at Wembley.

In 1936 he was made head groundsman. Four years later, at the height of the Battle of Britain, came the worst moment he has had at Wembley. He arrived on duty one morning to find the pitch a shambles. Near one goal was a crater caused by an oil bomb which had sprayed half the pitch. He tried various ways of loosening the oil, but with little effect.

"In the end I decided to let it dry off and grow out," he says. After four mowings the pitch was almost back to normal.

On the Wednesday before the 1941 War Cup Final, Young joined the R.A.F. He had already got the ground ready, and when the match was being played he was on a train to Skegness.

Posted to Kinloss, Scotland, he found himself assigned to chores which hardly tallied with his ideas of war service. Soon he noticed that the airfield sports ground was being left to the spare-time care of volunteers.

At last, Young plucked up enough courage to ask the sports officer for the job of groundsman. "What experience have you had at it?" he was asked.

Young, briefly classified in R.A.F. records as "groundsman," told him. "When I mentioned *where* I worked," he relates, "the officer nearly threw his arms round my neck." Until he was posted to more active service, Young was in charge of the sports field.

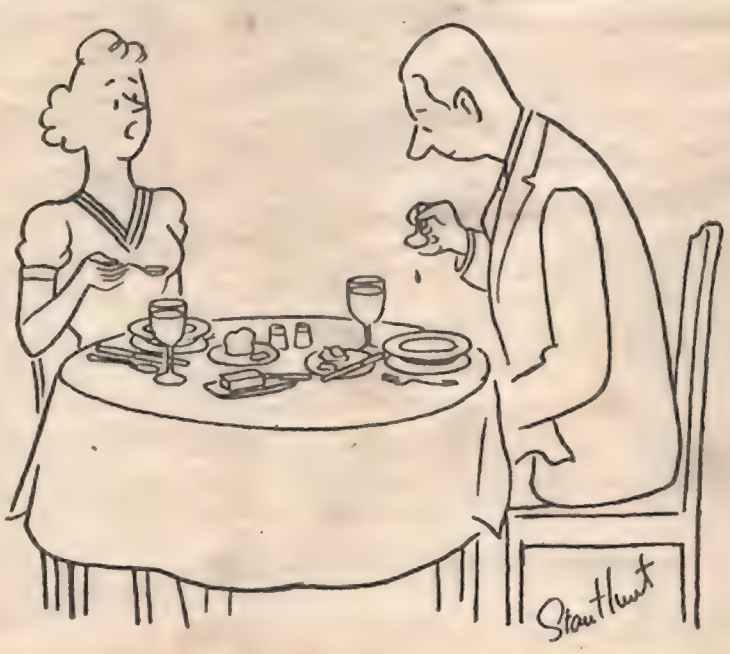
Nowadays, many who served with him write to Young just before each F.A. Cup Final, asking for his help in getting tickets. "I also find," says Young, "that spring brings out a lot of relatives I never thought I had."

In fact, in the weeks of mounting tension outside the ground, and of practical hard work within, Young has little time for anything but groundsmanship. And so precise are the crowd arrangements that the 550 members of the staff are issued with special passes to get them into the ground.

Could Not Find Pass

On the morning of the 1950 Cup Final, when Arsenal played Liverpool, Young reached the ground early, only to find that he had mislaid his pass. The commissionaire refused to let him through. "I told him I just had to get in, but it made no difference."

After nearly twenty minutes' rummaging through his pockets and papers, Young was just about to go to the nearest telephone in desperation to ring the Wembley Stadium offices when he found the pass—in the folds of a seed catalogue. THE END



"I made it from the paper the meat was wrapped in. Why?"

THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS

Continued from page 9

looks at the wrong thing, though whether because one happens to do so or because you're meant to, it's very hard to say. Misdirection, the conjurors call it. So clever, aren't they? And I never *have* known how they manage with a bowl of goldfish—because really that cannot fold up small, can it?"

Inspector Curry blinked a little and said soothingly: "Quite so. Now, ma'am, I've had an account of this evening's events from Miss Bellever. A most anxious time for all of you, I'm sure."

"Yes, indeed. It was all so *dramatic*, you know."

"First, this to-do between Mr. Serrocold and"—he looked down at a note he had made—"this Edgar Lawson."

"A very odd young man," said Miss Marple. "I have felt all along that there was something wrong about him."

"I'm sure you have," said Inspector Curry. "And then, after that excitement was over, there came Mr. Gulbrandsen's death. I understand that you went with Mrs. Serrocold to see the—er—the body."

"Yes, I did. She asked me to come with her. We are very old friends."

"Quite so. And you went along to Mr. Gulbrandsen's room: Did you happen to notice, ma'am, whether there was a letter or a piece of paper, say, in the typewriter?"

"There wasn't," said Miss Marple promptly. "I noticed that at once because it seemed to me odd. Mr. Gulbrandsen was sitting there at the typewriter, so he must have been typing something. Yes, I thought it very odd."

Inspector Curry looked at her sharply. He said: "Did you have much conversation with Mr. Gulbrandsen while he was here?"

"Very little."

"There is nothing especial — or significant—that you can remember?"

Miss Marple considered. "He asked me about Mrs. Serrocold's health. In particular, about her heart."

"Her heart? Is there something wrong with her heart?"

"Nothing whatever, I understand."

INSPECTOR CURRY was silent for a moment or two, then he said: "You heard a shot this evening during the quarrel between Mr. Serrocold and Edgar Lawson?"

"I didn't actually hear it myself. I am a little deaf, you know. But Mrs. Serrocold mentioned it as being outside in the park."

"Mr. Gulbrandsen left the party immediately after dinner, I understand?"

"Yes. He said he had letters to write."

"He didn't show any wish for a business conference with Mr. Serrocold?"

"No." Miss Marple added: "You see, they'd already had one little talk."

"They had? When? I understood that Mr. Serrocold only returned home just before dinner."

"That's quite true, but he walked up through the park, and Mr. Gulbrandsen went out to meet him and they walked up and down the terrace together."

"Who else knows this?"

"I shouldn't think anybody else," said Miss Marple. "Unless, of course, Mr. Serrocold told Mrs. Serrocold. I just happened to be looking out of my window—at some birds."

"Birds?"

"Birds." Miss Marple added after a moment or two: "I thought, perhaps, they might be siskins."

Inspector Curry was uninterested in siskins. "You didn't," he said delicately, "happen to—er—overhear anything of what they said?"

Innocent china-blue eyes met his. "Only fragments, I'm afraid," said Miss Marple gently.

"And those fragments?"

Miss Marple was silent a moment, then she said: "I do not know the actual subject of their conversation, but their immediate concern was to keep whatever it was from the knowledge of Mrs. Serrocold. To spare her—that

"How did the story end up?—I must have fallen asleep"

was how Mr. Gulbrandsen put it, and Mr. Serrocold said: 'I agree that it is she who must be considered.' They also mentioned a 'big responsibility,' and that they should, perhaps, 'take outside advice.'" She paused. "I think, you know, you had better ask Mr. Serrocold himself about all this."

"We shall do so, ma'am. Now there is nothing else that struck you as unusual this evening?"

Miss Marple considered. "It was all so unusual, if you know what I mean——"

"Quite so. Quite so."

Something flickered into Miss Marple's memory. "There was one rather unusual incident. Mr. Serrocold stopped Mrs. Serrocold from taking her medicine. But that, of course, is such a little thing. . . ."

"Yes, of course. Well, thank you, Miss Marple."

As Miss Marple went out of the room, Sergeant Lake said: "She's old, but she's sharp. . . ."

When Lewis Serrocold came into the office, the whole focus of the room immediately shifted. He turned to close the door behind him, and in doing so he created an atmosphere of privacy. He walked over and sat down, not in the chair Miss Marple had just vacated but in his own chair behind the desk. Miss Bellever had settled Inspector Curry in a chair drawn up to one side of the desk, as though unconsciously she had reserved Lewis Serrocold's chair against his coming.

When he had sat down, Lewis Serrocold looked at the two police officers thoughtfully. His face looked drawn and tired. It was the face of a man who was passing through a severe ordeal, and it surprised Inspector Curry a little because, though Christian Gulbrandsen's death must undeniably have been a shock to Lewis Serrocold, yet Gulbrandsen had not been a close friend or relation, only a rather remote connection by marriage.

In an odd way, the tables seemed to have been turned. It did not seem as though Lewis Serrocold had come into the room to answer police questioning. It seemed rather that Lewis Serrocold had arrived to preside over a court of inquiry. It irritated Inspector Curry a little.

He said briskly: "Now, Mr. Serrocold. . . ."

LEWIS SERROCOLD still seemed lost in thought. He said with a sigh: "How difficult it is to know the right thing to do."

Inspector Curry said: "I think *we* will be the judges as to that, Mr. Serrocold. Now, about Mr. Gulbrandsen. He arrived unexpectedly, I understand?"

"Quite unexpectedly."

"You did not know he was coming?"

"I had not the least idea of it."

"And you have no idea of why he came?"

Lewis Serrocold said quietly: "Oh, yes. I know why he came. He told me."

"When?"

"I walked up from the station. He was watching from the house, and came out to meet me. It was then that he explained what had brought him here."

"Business connected with the Gulbrandsen Institute, I suppose?"

"Oh, no. It was nothing to do with the Gulbrandsen Institute."

"Miss Bellever seemed to think it was."

"Naturally. That would be the assumption. Gulbrandsen did nothing to correct that impression. Neither did I."

"Why, Mr. Serrocold?"

Lewis Serrocold said slowly: "Because it seemed to both of us important that no hint should arise as to the real purpose of his visit."

"What was that real purpose?"

FOR a moment Lewis Serrocold was silent. Then he said gravely: "I fully realize that with Gulbrandsen's death—which was murder, undeniably murder—I have got to put all the facts before you. But frankly, I am concerned for my wife's happiness and peace of mind. It is not for me to dictate to you, Inspector, but if you can see your way to keeping certain things from her as far as possible I shall be grateful. You see, Inspector Curry, Christian Gulbrandsen came here expressly to tell me that he believed my wife was being slowly and coldbloodedly poisoned."

"*What?*" Curry jerked forward incredulously.

Serrocold nodded. "Yes, it was, as you can imagine, a tremendous shock to me. I had had no suspicion of such a thing myself, but as soon as Christian told me, I realized that certain symptoms my wife had complained of lately were quite compatible with that belief. What she took to be rheumatism, leg cramps, pain and occasional sickness. All that fits in very well with—the symptoms of arsenical poisoning."

"Miss Marple told us that Christian Gulbrandsen asked her about the condition of Mrs. Serrocold's heart."

"Did he now? That is interesting. I suppose he thought that a heart poison would be used since it paved the way to a sudden death without undue suspicion. But I think myself that arsenic is more likely."

"You definitely think, then, that Christian Gulbrandsen's suspicions were well founded?"

"Oh, yes. I think so. For one thing, Gulbrandsen would hardly come to me with such a suggestion unless he was fairly sure of his facts. He was a cautious and hard-headed man, difficult to convince, but very shrewd."

"What was his evidence?"

"We had no time to go into that. I couldn't think how, in America, he could have learned about it. But our interview was a hurried one. It served only the purpose of explaining his visit, and a mutual agreement that my wife should hear nothing about the matter until we were sure of our facts."

"And whom did he suspect of administering poison?"

"He did not say, and actually I don't think he knew. He *may* have suspected. I think now that he probably did suspect—otherwise why should he be killed?"

"But he mentioned no name to you?"

"He mentioned no name. We agreed that we must investigate the matter thoroughly, and he suggested inviting the advice and co-operation of Dr. Galbraith, the Bishop of Cromer. Dr. Galbraith is a very old friend of the Gulbrandsens and is one of the trustees of the Institute. He is a man of great wisdom and experience, and would be of great help and comfort to my wife if—if it was necessary to tell her of our suspicions. We meant to rely on his advice as to whether or not to consult the police."

"Quite extraordinary," said Curry.

"Gulbrandsen left us after dinner to write to Dr. Galbraith. He was actually in the act of typing a letter to him when he was shot."

"How do you know?"

Lewis said calmly: "Because I took the letter out of the typewriter. I have it here."

From his breast pocket he drew out a folded typewritten sheet of paper and handed it to Curry.

The latter said sharply: "You shouldn't have taken this, or touched anything in the room."

"I touched nothing else. I know that I committed an unpardonable offence in your eyes in moving this, but I felt certain that my wife would insist on coming into the room, and I was afraid that she might read something of what is written here. I admit myself in the wrong, but I am afraid I would do the same again. I would do anything—*anything*—to save my wife unhappiness."

Inspector Curry said no more for the moment. He read the typewritten sheet.

> Dear Dr. Galbraith, If it is at all possible, I beg that you will come to Stonygates as soon as you receive this. A crisis of extraordinary gravity has arisen and I am at a loss to know how to deal with it. I know how deep your affection is for our dear Carrie Louise, and how grave your concern will be for anything that affects her. How much has she got to know? How much can we keep from her? Those are the questions that I find so difficult to answer.
>
> Not to beat about the bush, I have reason to believe that that sweet and innocent lady is being slowly poisoned. I first suspected this when. . . .

Here, the letter broke off abruptly.

CURRY said: "And when he had reached this point, Christian Gulbrandsen was shot. . . . But why on earth was this letter left in the typewriter?"

"I can only conceive of two reasons. One, that the murderer had no idea to whom Gulbrandsen was writing and what was the subject of the letter. Secondly, he may not have had time. He may have heard someone coming and only just had time to escape unobserved."

"And Gulbrandsen gave you no hint as to whom he suspected—if he did suspect anyone?"

There was, perhaps, a very slight pause before Lewis answered. "None whatever." He added, rather obscurely: "Christian was a very fair man."

"How do you think this poison, arsenic or whatever it may be, was or is being administered?"

"I thought over that while I was changing for dinner, and it seemed to me that the most likely vehicle was some medicine, a tonic, that my wife was taking. Anyone could add arsenic to the medicine bottle."

"We must take the medicine and have it analysed."

Lewis said quietly: "I already have a sample of it. I took it this evening before dinner."

From a drawer in the desk he took out a small corked bottle with a red fluid in it.

Inspector Curry said with a curious glance: "You think of everything, Mr. Serrocold."

"I believe in acting promptly. Tonight I stopped my wife from taking her usual dose. It is still in a glass

on the oak dresser in the hall—the bottle of tonic itself is in the drawing-room."

Curry leaned forward across the desk. He lowered his voice and spoke confidentially and without officialdom.

"You'll excuse me, Mr. Serrocold, but just *why* are you so anxious to keep this from your wife? Are you afraid she'd panic? Surely, for her own sake, it would be as well if she were warned."

"Yes—yes, that may well be so. But I don't think you quite understand. Without knowing my wife, Caroline, it would be difficult. My wife, Inspector Curry, is so completely trustful a person. Of her it may truly be said that she sees no evil, hears no evil, and speaks no evil. It would be inconceivable to her that anyone could wish to kill her. But we have to go further than that. It is not just 'anyone.' It is a case—surely you see that—of someone possibly very near and dear to her. . . ."

"So that's what you think?"

"We have got to face facts. Close at hand we have a couple of hundred warped and stunted personalities who have expressed themselves often enough by crude and senseless violence. But by the very nature of things, none of *them* can be suspect in this case. A slow poisoner is someone living in the intimacy of family life. Think of the people who are here in this house; her husband, her daughter, her granddaughter, her granddaughter's husband, her stepson whom she regards as her own son, Miss Bellever, her devoted companion and friend of many years. All very near and dear to her, and yet the suspicion must arise—is it one of them?"

Curry said slowly: "There *are* outsiders——"

"Yes, in a sense. There is Dr. Maverick, one or two of the staff are often with us, there are the servants—but, frankly, what possible motive could they have?"

Inspector Curry said: "And there's young—what is his name again—Edgar Lawson?"

"Yes. But he has only been down here as a casual visitor just lately. He has no possible motive. Besides, he is deeply attached to Caroline—just as everyone is."

"But he's unbalanced. What about this attack on you tonight?"

Serrocold waved it aside impatiently. "Sheer childishness. He had no intention of harming me."

"Not with these two bullet-holes in the wall? He shot at you, didn't he?"

"He didn't mean to hit me. It was play-acting, no more."

"Rather a dangerous form of play-acting, Mr. Serrocold."

THERE was a deep sigh from Lewis Serrocold. "I am afraid you do not understand, Inspector. You must talk to our psychiatrist, Dr. Maverick. Edgar is an illegitimate child. He has consoled himself for his lack of a father and a humble origin by pretending to himself that he is the son of a celebrated man. It's a well-known phenomenon, I assure you. He was improving, improving very much. Then, for some reason, he had a setback. He identified me as his 'father' and made a melodramatic attack, waving a revolver and uttering threats. I was not in the least alarmed. When he had actually fired the revolver, he broke down and sobbed and Dr. Maverick took him away and gave him a sedative. He'll probably be quite normal tomorrow morning."

"You don't wish to bring a charge against him?"

"That would be the worst thing possible—for him, I mean."

"Frankly, Mr. Serrocold, it seems to me he ought to be under restraint. People who go about firing off revolvers to bolster up their egos! One has to think of the community, you know."

"Talk to Dr. Maverick on the subject," urged Lewis. "He'll give you the professional point of view. In any case," he added, "poor Edgar certainly did not shoot Gulbrandsen. He was in here threatening to shoot *me*."

"That's the point I was coming to, Mr. Serrocold. We've covered the outside. Anyone, it seems, could have come in from *outside*, and shot Mr. Gulbrandsen, since the terrace door was unlocked. But there is a narrower field *inside* the house, and in view of what you have been telling me, it seems to me that very close attention must be paid to that. Who, from *inside* the house, could have killed him?"

Lewis Serrocold said slowly, "That is difficult for me to say. There are the servants and the members of my household and our guests. They are, from your point of view, all possibilities, I suppose. I can only tell you that, as far as I know, everyone except the servants was in the great hall when Christian left it, and while I was there nobody left it."

"Nobody at all?"

"I think"—Lewis frowned in an effort of remembrance—"oh, yes. Some of the lights fused—Mr. Walter Hudd went to see to it."

"That's the young American gentleman?"

"Yes. Of course I don't know what took place after Edgar and I came in here."

Inspector Curry thought for a moment, and then sighed. He said: "You can tell the party that they can all go to bed. I'll talk to them tomorrow."

When Serrocold had left the room, Inspector Curry said to Lake: "Well—what do you think?"

"Knows—or thinks he knows—who did it," said Lake.

"Yes. I agree with you. And he doesn't like it a bit. . . ."

GINA greeted Miss Marple with a rush as the latter came down to breakfast the next morning. "The police are here again," she said. "They're in the library this time. Wally is absolutely fascinated by them. He can't understand their being so quiet and so remote. I think he's really quite thrilled by the whole thing. I'm not. I hate it. I think it's horrible. Why do you think I'm so upset? Because I'm half Italian?"

"Very possibly. At least perhaps it explains why you don't mind showing what you feel." Miss Marple smiled just a little as she said this.

"Jolly's frightfully cross," said Gina, hanging on Miss Marple's arm and propelling her into the dining-room. "I think really because the police are in charge and she can't exactly run them like she runs everybody else. Alex and Stephen," she continued severely, as they came into the dining-room where the two brothers were finishing their breakfast, "just don't care."

"Gina, dearest," said Alex, "you are most unkind. Good morning, Miss Marple. I care intensely. Except for the fact that I hardly knew your Uncle Christian, I'm far and away the best suspect. You do realize that, I hope."

"Why?"

"Well, I was driving up to the house at about the right time, it seems. And they've been checking up on times, and it seems that I took too much time between the lodge and the house—time enough, the implication is, to leave the car, run round the house, go in through the side door, shoot Christian and rush out and back to the car again."

"And what were you really doing?"

"Well, believe it or not, I was standing in front of the car, taking in the fog effect in the headlights and wondering how I'd get that effect on a stage."

Stephen Restarick said, with his thin, rather cruel, smile: "Now *I'm* quite all right! I never left the hall last night."

Gina stared at him. "But they couldn't possibly think it was one of *us*!" she cried. Her dark eyes were round and dismayed.

"Don't say it must have been a tramp, dear," said Alex, helping himself lavishly to marmalade. "It's so hackneyed."

Miss Bellever looked in at the door and said: "Miss Marple, when you have finished your breakfast, will you go to the library?"

"You again," said Gina. "Before any of us." She seemed a little injured.

"Hi! What was that?" asked Alex. "It sounded like a pistol shot."

"They've been firing shots in the room where Uncle Christian was killed," said Gina. "I don't know why. And outside, too."

The door opened again and Mildred Strete came in. She was wearing black with some onyx beads. She murmured "Good morning," without looking at anyone, and sat down.

In a hushed voice she said: "Some tea, please, Gina. Nothing much to eat—just some toast."

She touched her nose and eyes delicately with the handkerchief she held in one hand. Then she raised her eyes and looked in an unseeing way at the two brothers. Stephen and Alex became uncomfortable. Their voices dropped almost to a whisper and presently they got up and left.

Mildred Strete said, whether to the universe or Miss Marple was not quite certain: "Not even a black tie!"

"I don't suppose," said Miss Marple apologetically, "that they knew beforehand that a murder was going to happen."

Gina made a smothered sound, and Mildred Strete looked sharply at her.

"Where's Walter this morning?" she asked.

Gina flushed. "I don't know. I haven't seen him." She sat there uneasily like a guilty child.

Miss Marple got up. "I'll go to the library now," she said.

LEWIS SERROCOLD was standing by the window in the library. There was no one else in the room. He turned as Miss Marple came in and came to meet her, taking her hand.

"I hope," he said, "that you are not feeling the worse for the shock. A murder must be a great strain on anyone who has not come in contact with such a thing before."

Modesty forbade Miss Marple to reply that she was, by now, quite at home with murder. She merely said that life in her little village of St. Mary Mead was not quite so sheltered as outside people believed.

"Very nasty things go on in a village, I assure you," she said. "One has an opportunity of studying things there that one would never have in a town."

Lewis Serrocold listened indulgently, but with only half an ear. He said very simply: "I want your help."

"But of course, Mr. Serrocold."

"It is a matter that affects my wife—affects Caroline. I think that you are really attached to her."

"Yes, indeed. Everyone is."

"That is what I believed. It seems that I am wrong. With the permission of Inspector Curry, I am going to tell you something that no one else as yet knows. Or perhaps I should say, what only one person knows."

Briefly, he told her what he had told Inspector Curry the night before.

Miss Marple looked horrified. "I can't believe it, Mr. Serrocold. I really can't believe it."

"That is what I felt when Christian Gulbrandsen told me."

"I should have said that dear Carrie Louise hadn't an enemy in the world."

"It seems incredible that she should have. But you see the implication? Poisoning—slow poisoning—is an intimate family matter. It must be one of our closely knit little household——"

"If it is *true*. Are you sure that Mr. Gulbrandsen was not mistaken?"

"Christian was not mistaken. He was too cautious a man to make such a statement without foundation. Besides, the police took away Caroline's medicine bottle and a separate sample of its contents. There was arsenic in both of them—and arsenic was not prescribed. The actual quantitative tests will take longer, but the actual fact of arsenic being present is established."

"Then her rheumatism—the difficulty in walking—all that——"

"Yes, leg cramps are typical, I understand. Also, before you came, Caroline has had one or two severe attacks of a gastric nature—I never dreamed until Christian came. . . . Now, Miss Marple, you see how I am placed. Am I to tell Carrie Louise of this?"

Miss Marple said quickly: "Oh, no," in a distressed voice, and then flushed and stared doubtfully at Lewis.

He nodded. "So you feel as I do? As Christian Gulbrandsen did. Should

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

I MUST HAVE BEEN about three when this picture was taken, but I can't remember anything about it. I expect it was taken in Manchester, my home town.

My father was in the cotton business. I was the second of four children, the rest being boys.

The size of our family meant that there was always a tribe of children in and out of the house. There was only one bicycle between the four of us at one time, and as we frequently all rode it at once—I was allocated to the handlebars—we had many a spill.

But my biggest fall was from the garden see-saw. I was sitting on one end of it and someone heavy must have got on suddenly at the other end. I was catapulted into the air—rather like an acrobat in a music hall turn—and flew over the fence into the next garden. A tooth was broken, but luckily that was all.

We were always putting on plays of our own, and by the time I was sent to boarding-school, at thirteen, I was able to produce the school production of *Macbeth*—with splendid lighting effects with bicycle lamps and torches. I picked the part of the First Witch for myself.

One of the teachers encouraged my parents to put me on the stage and advised that I should go straight into a repertory theatre rather than a school of drama. So now I always say I am self-taught.

I was apprenticed to Manchester Rep., where I was assistant stage manager and small-part actress for thirty-eight plays a year. No factory worker would accept the conditions under which I worked for fifteen hours a day, if they could help it, but I enjoyed it all, and am grateful for the varied experience it gave me.

My big chance came when my husband wrote the play of *Love on the Dole*. No one else in the company could speak broad Lancashire, but my Manchester background made this easy for me.

Today she is a leading actress. For her name, turn to page 31.

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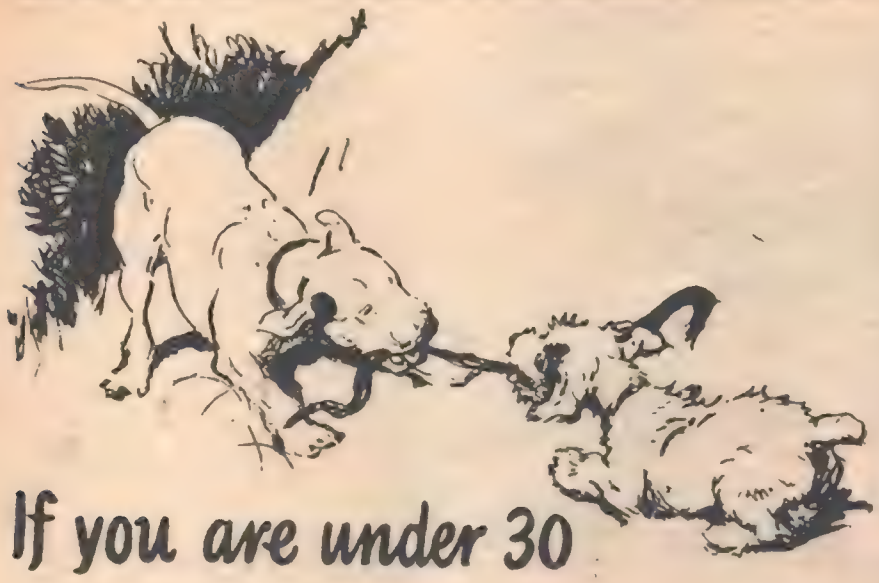

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we feel like that with an ordinary woman?"

"Carrie Louise is *not* an ordinary woman. She lives by her trust, by her belief in human nature. Oh, dear! I am expressing myself very badly. But I do feel that until we know who——"

"Yes, that is the crux. But you do see, Miss Marple, that there is a risk in saying nothing. . . ."

"And so you want me, to—how shall I put it?—watch over her?"

"You see, you are the only person whom I can trust," said Lewis Serrocold simply. "Everyone here *seems* devoted. But are they? Now your attachment goes back many years."

"And also I only arrived a few days ago," said Miss Marple pertinently.

Lewis Serrocold smiled. "Exactly."

"It is a very mercenary question," said Miss Marple apologetically, "but who exactly would benefit if dear Carrie Louise were to die?"

"Money!" said Lewis bitterly. "It always boils down to money, doesn't it?"

"Well, I really think it must in this case. Because Carrie Louise is a very sweet person with a great deal of charm, and one cannot really imagine anyone disliking her. She couldn't, I mean, have an *enemy*. So then it does boil down, as you put it, to a question of money, because as you don't need me to tell you, Mr. Serrocold, people will quite often do anything for money."

"I suppose so, yes." He went on: "Naturally, Inspector Curry has already taken up that point. Mr. Gilfoy is coming down from London today and can give detailed information. Gilfoy, Gilfoy, Jaimes and Gilfoy are a very eminent firm of lawyers. This Gilfoy's father was one of the original trustees and they drew up both Caroline's will and the original will of Eric Gulbrandsen. I will put it in simple terms for you——"

"Thank you," said Miss Marple gratefully. "So mystifying, the law, I always think."

LEWIS SERROCOLD nodded. He said: "Eric Gulbrandsen, after endowment of the college and his various fellowships and trusts and other charitable bequests, and having settled an equal sum on his daughter, Mildred, and on his adopted daughter, Pippa (Gina's mother), left the remainder of his vast fortune in trust, the income from it to be paid to Caroline for her lifetime."

"And after her death?"

"After her death it was to be divided between Mildred and Pippa—or their children if they themselves had predeceased Caroline."

"So that in fact it goes to Mildred Strete and to Gina."

"Yes. Caroline has also quite a considerable fortune of her own—though not in the Gulbrandsen class. Half of this she made over to me four years ago. Of the remaining amount, she left ten thousand pounds to Juliet Bellever, and the rest equally divided between Alex and Stephen Restarick."

"Oh, dear!" said Miss Marple. "That's bad. That's very bad."

"Quite."

"It means everyone in the house had a financial motive."

"Yes. And yet, you know, I can't believe that any of these people would do murder. I simply can't. . . . Mildred is her daughter—and already quite well provided for. Gina is devoted to her grandmother. She is generous and extravagant, but has no acquisitive feelings. Jolly Bellever is fanatically devoted to Caroline. The two Restaricks care for Caroline as though she were really their mother. They have no money of their own to speak of, but quite a lot of Caroline's income has gone towards financing their enterprises—especially so with Alex. I simply can't believe either of those two would deliberately poison her for the sake of inheriting money at her death. I just can't believe any of it, Miss Marple."

"There's Gina's husband, isn't there?"

"Yes," said Lewis gravely. "There is Gina's husband."

"You don't really know much about him. And one can't help seeing that he's a very unhappy young man."

Lewis sighed. "He hasn't fitted in here—no. He's no interest in or sympathy for what we're trying to do. But I understand he has a very fine war record."

"Not that that helps," said Miss Marple candidly. "Because war is one thing, and everyday life is quite another. And actually to commit a murder, I think you do need bravery—or perhaps, more often, just conceit. Yes, conceit."

"But I would hardly say that Walter Hudd had a sufficient motive."

"Wouldn't you?" said Miss Marple. "He hates it here. He wants to get away. He wants to get Gina away. And if it's really money he wants, it would be important to him that Gina should get all the money before she—er—definitely forms an attachment to someone else."

"An attachment to someone else?" said Lewis, in an astonished voice.

Miss Marple wondered at the blindness of enthusiastic social reformers.

"That's what I said. Both the Restaricks are in love with her, you know."

"Oh, I don't think so," said Lewis absently. "Stephen's invaluable to us—quite invaluable. The way he's got those lads coming along, keen, interested. They gave a splendid show last month. Scenery, costumes, everything. It just shows, as I've always said to Dr. Maverick, that it's lack of drama in their lives that leads these boys to crime. To dramatize himself is a child's natural instinct. Maverick says—ah, yes, Maverick. . . ."

He broke off: "I want Maverick to see Inspector Curry about Edgar," he said. "The whole thing is so ridiculous really."

"What do you really know about Edgar Lawson, Mr. Serrocold?"

"Everything," said Lewis positively. "Everything, that is, that one needs to know. His background, upbringing—his deep-seated lack of confidence in himself——"

Miss Marple interrupted: "Couldn't Edgar Lawson have poisoned Mrs. Serrocold?"

"Hardly. He's only been here a few weeks. And, anyway, it's ridiculous! Why should Edgar want to poison my wife? What could he possibly gain by doing so?"

"Nothing material, I know. But he might have—some *odd* reason. He *is* odd, you know."

"You mean unbalanced?"

"I suppose so. No, I don't—not quite. What I mean is, he's all *wrong*."

It was not a very lucid exposition of what she felt. Lewis Serrocold accepted the words at their face value.

"Yes," he said with a sigh. "He's all wrong, poor lad. And he was showing such marked improvement. I can't really understand why he had this sudden setback. . . ."

Miss Marple leaned forward eagerly. "Yes, that's what I wondered. If. . . ."

She broke off as Inspector Curry came into the room.

To be continued next week

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by ROFFE THOMPSON

"You know that drink you fixed for me last night, George? Well, you were absolutely right—it *does* help a fellow answer back to his wife!"

FAREWELL SYMPHONY

Continued from page 13

never offered Simon a chance to take rehearsals, say; there was a young man of fifty to do that.

There you have Simon Taylor. "Eating his heart out" is the stock overstatement, but with him I imagine it may very well have been true. At the very least he must have felt a considerable frustration.

Then, of course, the war came, and his troubles were over. . . .

All the time I was on that station, I went on only three missions, each time in Simon's aeroplane. From the third mission, a routine trip over Milan, we did not return. An oil line failed—they were always doing that—and we landed on a beach in the heel of Italy. It was a good landing; the aircraft wasn't even slightly damaged.

As soon as the plane landed we were surrounded by peasants, and in five minutes the *carabinieri* had arrived. We spent that night in the local jail, and the next day the Italian army came and hauled us off. In a couple of days we found ourselves in a prison camp at Palena.

We were agreeably surprised to find that the place had athletic fields, a hospital, and even a theatre. The entire camp, except at the entrance, was walled, with towers at intervals where guards sat; fifty feet inside the wall was a barbed-wire fence, and the alley thus made, surrounding everything but the theatre, which was set right at the main entrance, was also out of bounds. A prisoner, even if he went in the alley only to retrieve a lost ball, was fair game to be shot.

When we crashed, Simon had been wearing an overall suit with pockets below the knees. It was an ordinary enough costume, but Simon was the only one of us who happened to be wearing it; we were all surprised when, on our second day in camp, at least ten of the old prisoners tried to bargain with him for it. I forgot to mention that there were American and Australian and New Zealand officers as well as British in the camp. In any case, it was an Englishman who first approached him, and offered to trade him an overcoat for the overalls.

"But why?" Simon said.

An American major said, "I'll give you a practically new pair of flying boots."

A New Zealander said, "I'll give you my wine ration for two months."

Another American said, "I'll give you my candy."

Others said, "I'll give you this," "I'll give you that."

We were all bewildered. For two days Simon hesitated between the offers. Then a Captain Charles Reilly, who slept in the same barracks with us, offered a violin, and with no hesitation Simon handed over the overalls. When the others heard about it, they groaned.

It was two weeks before we found out what the commotion had been about, when, that is, we found out about the Escape Committee. This, like the ones you've heard about in other camps, was a highly organized, extremely acute, and surprisingly successful group which managed to smuggle prisoners back to our lines. In Palena there was a house, a station on a sort of underground railway, from which, if you reached it, you were moderately sure of being passed along to safety.

I said it was highly organized. It consisted of tailors, bootmakers, dyers, armourers—every sort of worker who could be of assistance. The reason for the covetous attitude toward the overalls was that, properly resewn, dyed and fitted, and with the addition of boots, a cap, and a painted wooden pistol, they could be made into the perfect counterfeit of a German paratrooper's uniform—a handy thing for an escapee behind the lines to have.

But enough of that. It is the violin that we were really interested in. The violin and a peculiar circumstance. It is a circumstance which, if it sounds fortuitous now, was in wartime almost standard practice. The Red Cross, while it had managed to stock the Palena camp with an oversupply of almost any sort of musical instrument you can name, had somehow neglected to send a single sheet of music to go with it.

Simon took advantage of the situation. He made this proposition: he would write out the parts of all sorts of scores on the condition that he was to be the conductor of the group. His fellow prisoners jumped at the offer, and out of about forty applicants Simon found twenty-seven men who played well enough to form an orchestra. Reilly borrowed his violin back and became first fiddle.

Simon's orchestra practised as much as four and sometimes five hours a day. At the end of three months, they were beginning to make really competent sounds.

The next part of the story is something that could have happened only in Italy. I suppose it is no news to you that Italians love music, but I wonder if you know quite how general that love is or how nice the appreciation? One of the guards at the camp, a fellow called Gino, began, after the first few weeks of practice, to hang around the hall or auditorium, or whichever place Simon and his men were using. Gino was a middle-aged man, stocky and undistinguished-looking, but he sat, we noticed, with a rapt and happy look on his face

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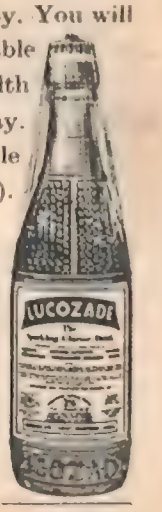

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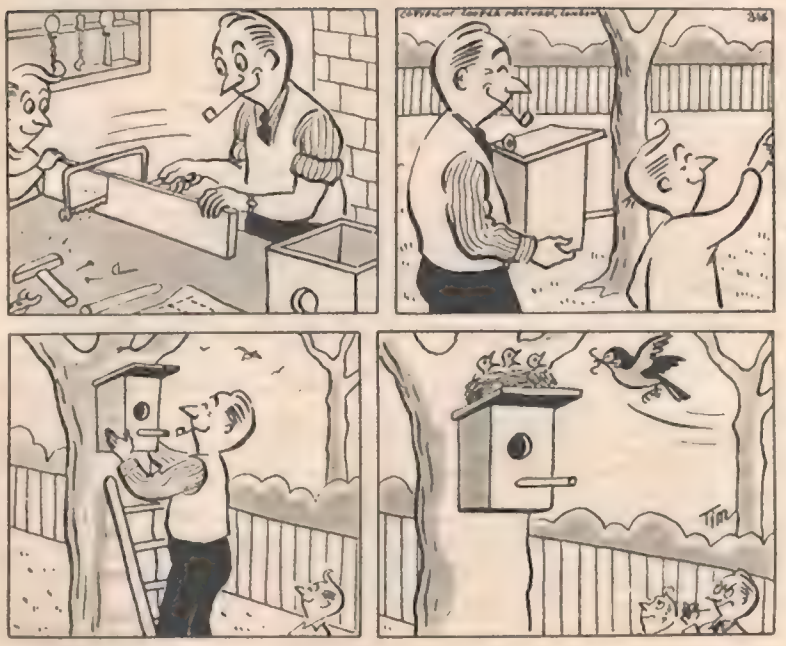
OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



whenever the rehearsal went well.

Simon was happy. That's an odd thing to say about anyone in a prison camp; but for the first time in his life he was doing exactly what he wanted to do.

Finally the time came when the orchestra was good enough to attempt a series of public concerts. A delegation, of which I was a member, called upon the *commendatore* of the camp, and requested that the theatre be allowed us each Friday night, with those prisoners who wished to come as audience. The request was granted.

It was then that the remarkable thing happened with Gino. Simon and I were leaving the mess one lunchtime, and Gino stopped us. "Excuse me, *Tenente*," he said, "but I have something to tell you. The violin, the one the Captain Reilly plays, is not a good one. For a concert it is not good enough. I have a violin, a real one, at home. I live in Chieti, not far, and I could bring it."

Simon said, "You have? What kind is it?"

"A Guarnerius," Gino said.

Simon opened his eyes. "You don't mean it?"

"Yes," Gino said.

"A real one?"

"A real one. It belonged to my grandfather and my uncle, and now it is mine."

Simon put out his hands and grasped Gino's arm. "This is wonderful," he said. "Reilly will play a concerto, the Mozart Concerto in A Major."

It was upon the choice of the music to be played in the concert that much of this story hangs, and that choice, quite innocently, was Simon's. He planned to begin with selections from the Nutcracker Suite, then do the Mozart. After a short intermission he would begin again with the Brahms Lullaby, and finish with Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony.

The "Farewell" Symphony isn't played much. But it has something very interesting about it, which Simon knew. Joseph Haydn was for a long time conductor and composer to Prince Nicolaus, a fabulous eighteenth-century character who lived better than most kings. One of his palaces, Schloss Esterházy, was, next to Versailles, the most fabulous establishment in Europe. It had three theatres, for instance. And of course there was Haydn and his orchestra. Nicolaus was rather a tyrant, for he allowed none of the members of the orchestra to keep their wives and families with them. They had to remain in Vienna.

One winter, when he himself was off to Paris for four months, he arbitrarily ordered the entire orchestra to stay at the palace. It was then that Haydn wrote the "Farewell." You know, of course, that as it progresses, one after another of the players picks up his instrument and leaves the stage, until at the end only two are left. Well, Nicolaus got the point, and allowed his players to go to Vienna. And Simon's idea was this: he said to Reilly, "We poke a little fun at the *commendatore*. Suggest to him, delicately, that we would like to go home. It ought to put him in a good humour, and it will give the rest something to talk about."

Reilly nodded. "Good programming," he said, "very good programming. That's what people like—tricks."

And then I saw a change come over his face. "It's a hell of an idea," Reilly said. . . .

Captain Reilly was a member of the Escape Committee. He called it together and laid before it a plan. It was a simple, indeed obvious, plan. Each member of the orchestra, as he walked off-stage in the "Farewell" Symphony, was to make his escape.

What made it so good was this: there was only *one* complication, and it had already partly solved itself. That was Gino.

Gino had to be persuaded that, on the night of the concert, he would be the guard at the front entrance of the camp. The theatre was situated at the entrance. Gino must swap whatever post he had with the entrance guard, so that *he could hear his violin being played*. Logical.

Reilly gave Simon and me the details one midnight in the barracks. I'll never forget that, and Simon's silence as he listened. "I'll be the first off stage," Reilly said. "A violation of Haydn, but it can't be helped. I'll go to the doorway, hold up the violin, beckon to Gino. If all goes well he'll come towards me. By that time a second man will be off. Maybe even a third. And we'll all have blackjacks."

It all depended on Gino. If he played—fine. But even if he didn't, nothing would be suspected, nothing lost.

Well, that was it. The underground outside was advised. They were to be ready with clothes and transportation and further plans.

I hardly liked to look at Simon that last week. The musicians were tense, stiff; rehearsals went badly; the ambition of Simon's life was souring. His position had been reduced from that of star to that of the most unimportant actor.

But the night of the concert came along, and it was a triumph. Simon found out—we all did—in those two hours, that he had within him whatever the qualities are that go to make up a conductor. Somehow, with his own strength, he forced out of his players music that had seemed beyond their capacities. That is something that, however you hope for it, you can never be sure of until you have tried. Simon felt, heard, knew. He was a conductor.

The auditorium was jammed. The *commendatore*, with his staff, sat in a roped-off section, and he had with him the mayor of Palena.

The men responded to the gaiety of the selections from the Nutcracker Suite. If they did not entirely understand all the beauties of the Mozart Reilly played on the rare and powerful Guarnerius, they were certainly respectful. The Brahms, of course, was soothing and faintly familiar; then came the Haydn.

The Haydn. All through it, to a man, we sat rigid. Our attention never wandered, our eyes never left the stage.

Then the moment came. Simon's baton was trembling uncontrollably. Reilly stood up and walked off the stage. There was not even a murmur of surprise. The next man left, then the next. The *commendatore*, getting the point (for it had been told to him), turned to the mayor and whispered the secret. They both smiled.

The next man left. The next. I watched Simon's hands swing over the score; they were shaking. He turned his head in profile, and forced himself to smile.

The next man, the next man, and finally the last. Simon held his arms meaninglessly, tensely in front of him, as if, perhaps, he were expecting the entire orchestra to return so he could relax. For a minute, a whole minute, he stood so. Then he relaxed, turned, smiled.

The applause was a roar. Poor Simon. He would never know how much of it was real. At the beginning, certainly it sounded real. But the applause that went on and on—the roars, the cheers, the stampings, the bravos—had been ordered, we all knew, by the Escape Committee.

For five minutes, *five* minutes, it went on, and would have gone on for ten had not the *commendatore* made a move. He sent one of his men down the aisle to speak to Simon. But it was difficult, very difficult, with all the noise. Simon could not hear, although he leaned down and cupped his ear.

Finally, the *commendatore's* man leaped on the stage and walked into the wings. The *commendatore*, you see, had told him to have Simon bring out the whole orchestra to share in the applause.

Then, of course, what had happened was discovered. Gino had co-operated. They found him, beside his guard box, stretched out cold with his Guarnerius laid on his chest.

Well, you can imagine what followed. Pandemonium. Sirens, bells, searchlights, guards running, guns shooting.

But the orchestra got away. There had been time, just enough time, for them to make it to safety. Oh, I should not call it safety; they had a tough and bitter time afterwards, but that is another story.

As for Simon, I suppose I do not need to point out to you that there was no more music at the Palena prison camp for Allied officers. . . .

* * *

Alex Burton got up and walked over to a table to fix himself a new drink. I looked after him.

As he poured the soda into the glass, he looked back at me and said, "Any questions?"

I nodded. "Yes." I said, "Where is Simon Taylor now?"

Alex frowned and shook his head. "My word," he said, "that should be obvious. I told you this was an ironic story. Simon Taylor is librarian of a symphony orchestra. In the provinces."

THE END

THE MIGHTY BALCON

Continued from page 15

became firm friends, and Veidt, until the day of his death, never forgot his gratitude to Mick for getting him and his wife out of Hitler's long reach.

The completion of *Jew Süss*, unfortunately for Balcon, coincided with an American attack on British film producers; and the film itself was charged, by different factions in the United States, with being pro-Jewish on the one hand and anti-Semitic on the other. Balcon decided to go to the States himself to help to put across the film, which had been renamed *Power* for American consumption.

He soon learned that it was the practice in America to have a controversial film "endorsed" by a prominent person before releasing it. Someone suggested to Balcon that he should show *Power* to the great German-Jewish scientist, Albert Einstein, who had recently found a haven at Princeton University. A mutual friend arranged a meeting, and Balcon hired a car in New York and was driven the fifty or so miles to Princeton. He knocked at the door of the cottage where Einstein lived, and presently the white-haired scientist opened it himself.

"This is a great honour, Professor Ein——" Balcon began, and at that moment the great man swept past him with a glad cry, hurried to the car, and threw his arms around the chauffeur. "He was my chauffeur when I was driven around New York on the day I arrived from Germany," he explained. Despite this unusual first meeting, Balcon was delighted when Einstein later agreed to endorse his film.

New Star Is Found

At this time—in the early thirties—Balcon first recognized the talents of a girl he was later to call "the greatest artist I ever worked with." He was casting a film and had some difficulty in finding an actress to play the part of a maid. "It had to be a vivacious, cheeky girl," Balcon said later. "I decided to test Jessie Matthews, and she was just right." He followed this up, in 1932, with *The Good Companions*, the film version of J. B. Priestley's immensely popular novel. Jessie again starred. This was the first talking picture to be presented at a Royal Command Performance, and it was a blow to Miss Matthews that, because of a divorce, she of all the film's cast could not be presented to Queen Mary.

When the royal guests rose at the end of the film, however, and the audience stood respectfully for them to depart, Queen Mary looked towards Miss Matthews—and suddenly smiled directly at her. Almost overcome at this gracious act, Jessie curtsied where she stood at her seat. Then the Queen swept regally past. Tears sprang into the star's wide eyes. "How wonderful of her to recognize me!" she murmured. "How wonderful of the Queen!"

Once Balcon got under way at Islington and Shepherds Bush, his output of films grew rapidly. Soon he was hard-pressed to find studio space in which to make them. He reached out to Canada and made *The Great Barrier* there; *Rhodes of Africa* was shot in Africa; he found studio facilities in Austria for *The Constant Nymph*, and in Hollywood for *Journey's End*. And he was still convinced that he could capture a market in America by using Hollywood stars in his pictures.

It was during this period that Balcon visited Hollywood for the first time, with the intention of signing acting talent. Mrs. Balcon went with him.

Making A Good Impression

Balcon has always been known in the industry as a neat and tidy dresser, but in those days he also affected an umbrella which he never unrolled. Since this was his first Hollywood visit, Mick wanted to be sure that everything about him—his manner, his business dealings, his appearance—would uphold the prestige of the industry in Britain. He wanted to make a good first impression. But, as the transcontinental train rolled into the station at their west coast destination, where a Hollywood reception committee awaited them, the Balcons noted that it was raining.

"Now, then, Mickey," Mrs. Balcon said, "this is once you will have to open your umbrella."

Balcon grinned. "All right, Aileen. I'll make a big gesture." As they

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stepped out, smiling, on to the platform for their official welcome, he flipped the catch of his umbrella and unfurled it. In doing so, Mick made his arrival an impressive one, if not exactly in the way he had hoped. He had failed to consider what time could do to a tightly rolled umbrella; and over his head he held an elegant frame, on the bare ribs of which flapped a few forlorn bits of rotted silk. Balcon is a sensitive man, and the incident, though trivial, was sorely embarrassing to him. Years later he was to make a film called *The Man in the White Suit*, in which Alec Guinness had his clothes ripped off by a mob. "I know just how he feels," Sir Michael said, referring to the film's victim, but thinking of the umbrella episode. "Something like that once happened to me."

Hollywood Caste System

It was during that visit that Mrs. Balcon gained an impression of the film city which she has never had cause to change. Soon after their arrival, she and her husband went to a formal party given by an important producer. Mrs. Balcon was dazzled by the display of diamonds, emeralds and rubies draped almost as profusely as Christmas tree ornaments around the middle-aged figure of the producer's wife. "What beautiful jewels you have!" Aileen remarked admiringly.

In a tone which made it clear that she belonged near the top of the rigid Hollywood caste system, the hostess replied: "These things? Why, they're *last* year's jewels, my dear!"

For a while, Balcon continued filming with great success. He made a number of musicals, some starring Jessie Matthews — *Evergreen*, one of his greatest successes, belongs to this list —and others, including *Jack's the Boy*, starring Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. But in 1936 a film crisis cast a dark shadow over the industry, and production dwindled to a mere trickle.

Balcon had been uneasy about his work for several months previously. "From a creative point of view," he has since said, "that period was fallow. I was on the wrong track." He was, however, still convinced that there was a market for British-made films in the United States. Thus, when Louis B. Mayer, chief of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and long considered to be Hollywood's most powerful man, offered him the position of M-G-M's production chief in Great Britain, Balcon thought this might be the way to achieve his end. He signed a long-term contract.

In order to learn M-G-M's methods, Balcon went to Hollywood for six months. He was treated by his boss like visiting royalty during this stay, although there were times—and particularly on Sundays—when Balcon would have preferred anonymity. In those days, Louis B. was the uncrowned emperor of the film city, and he held court—for his favourites only—at breakfast on Sundays. Balcon was a favourite, and breakfast was served at half-past eleven.

Bridge After Breakfast

After breakfast, the guests were supposed to play either pinocle or bridge. Neither game was in Balcon's repertoire. Whenever he found the opportunity, he slipped away for a quiet walk and returned later to pick up Mrs. Balcon, who did play bridge. Often, however, the Sunday morning court would drag on through the afternoon and even into the evening. It was an unwritten Hollywood law that if Mayer invited anyone to stay on for, say, a private evening showing of an M-G-M picture, regardless of other appointments that person stayed. Balcon suffered in silence.

During his six months in Hollywood, Balcon learned at first hand just how high-pressure life there could be. Some of the things he saw tickled his sense of humour, but he tried politely to keep a straight face. He had one experience, in particular, which had some of the visual qualities which were later to find their way into Ealing comedies.

In August, Mayer announced that he was going to Europe. Before his departure, a superb luncheon was given to him by the producers and directors at M-G-M. Unfortunately, it was a very hot afternoon, even for California in August. The high point of the luncheon was reached when his executives presented Mayer with their gift. Meanwhile, the studio orchestra was waiting outside the door for its cue to play. All these factors were to combine to create a quality of chaos Balcon had never before encountered, hasn't since, and probably never will again.

Mayer rose and started to make his speech of gratitude and appreciation. But the intense heat and the ample lunch, coming on top of months of strain and overwork, were too much for him. In mid-speech, he suddenly clutched the edge of the table and fell to the floor in a dead faint.

Instantly, the room filled with consternation, more manifest than helpful. Finally, somebody rushed out to get the studio doctor. The orchestra mistook this for its cue, and blared forth, "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot." It is difficult to communicate with a band once it has begun playing—and this was no exception. It played on and on. Balcon will never forget that mad scene. However, when he returned to London he told a journalist: "Louis B. Mayer is the greatest executive I have ever met."

Soon he had cause to revise this estimate. In England, he plunged into work on *A Yank at Oxford*, star-studded with Robert Taylor, Maureen O'Sullivan, Vivien Leigh and Lionel Barrymore. During the making of this film, he felt more and more the pressure methods of a big American studio. "I thought I was to run the studio here on entirely British lines," he commented at a later date, "but they sent Ben Goetz over to keep an eye on me. I had to refer everything to him, and I felt hamstrung. They were nervous about what I was doing, I expect." Goetz, incidentally, was, and still is, a friend of Mick's.

No One Spoke To Him

Balcon had become accustomed over his years of ups and downs in the film industry to an independence of thought and action which made M-G-M's watch-dog attitude a constant irritation. It soon became clear that Mayer did not really believe that any producer, not Hollywood-trained, could make pictures. One after the other, he sent high M-G-M officials to England to see how Balcon was doing. They poked around the studios where *A Yank at Oxford* was being made, ready to criticize.

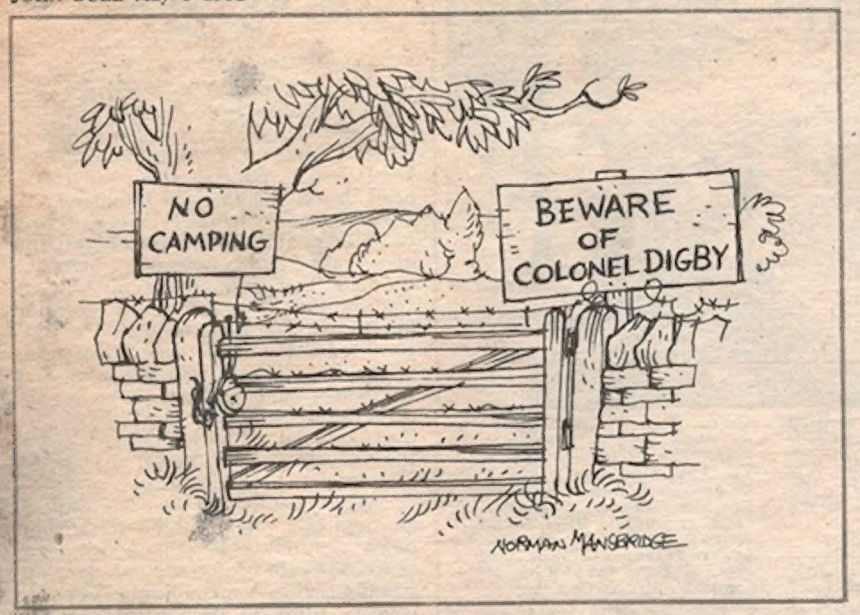
Finally, Mayer himself came over to look in on the new boy. At a production conference, one of Mayer's executives made a suggestion with which Balcon disagreed strongly. With his customary directness, sharpened by months of supervision, he said so. Mayer, with equal directness, took his executive's side, and the fight was now out in the open.

But the studio's way of combating Balcon was, to say the least, unusual. For weeks on end hardly any studio official so much as spoke to him. He sat in his office, forced by the terms of his contract to report every day, with nothing to do. The mere thought of idleness has always chafed Balcon. He began to think, in the deadly dullness which had been forced upon him, of where he had gone wrong in the making of films and of how he could improve his work if he ever got back to it.

Of one thing he was now certain: he did not fit into a big film-making machine. He worked better in an independent atmosphere. Meanwhile, *A Yank at Oxford* was completed and became one of M-G-M's big successes.

Then, one day, while Balcon brooded in his small office at Denham, Mayer pushed open the door. At once he began to air their differences. A crowd scene was being shot outside Balcon's office window. Presently Balcon became aware that the argument could be heard by everyone in the scene. Mick had had enough. Very quietly, he said: "I think we've come to the parting of the ways, Mr. Mayer." Once more he was without a job or, it seemed, a future; for he had dared to buck the biggest man in films.

NEXT WEEK: How Balcon found the pattern for his "Ealing" films



MAJOR HELEN FIGHTS TO SAVE SINNERS

Continued from page 11

quietly left the hall. Major Helen, still on her knees, now prayed for the "two young lives that had just been given to God." Then she rose and led the meeting in the army's Hallelujah Wind-up, with a hymn of rejoicing.

"When any stranger comes to our meetings," says Major Helen, "you may be sure I am right after him."

One day a strange woman appeared at a Sunday meeting. Major Helen asked her why she had come, and she replied that when the band had passed her window she just could not resist following it. She started attending meetings regularly after that, but the major was discouraged because she was not converted. She was hesitating, the major learned, because she worked with her husband in a public house, where they lived in a room above the bar. A decision for Christianity on Salvation Army lines would mean that she would have to give up her home, her job and possibly her husband, unless he, too, could be converted.

Under Major Helen's persistent attack she finally faced these hazards. Eventually the husband started coming to meetings and soon he, too, was converted, homeless and jobless. "Naturally, I had to look after them," the major explains. "They were forced to live apart for a time, and they had to be kept on the path. I couldn't afford to let them become discouraged. There's nothing like a little discouragement to destroy all the good work." To the major, looking after them meant finding them a place to live and new jobs.

The major always keeps new converts under close observation, "until they are thoroughly grounded." She visits them once or twice a week as a matter of course, oftener where necessary. "If they don't turn up for a meeting I hurry straight out to learn why."

The Repentant Drunkard

Major Helen's first recollection of Salvation Army welfare is an incident that occurred when she was a child of five or six. Her mother and father were soldiers in a corps near Blantyre.

One Sunday night she went to a meeting with her mother. A notorious drunkard broke under the meeting's emotional weight and came to the penitents' bar. "He was a big fellow, very rough, and I remember I was frightened when my mother got up and knelt beside him."

Major Helen retains a vivid memory of the bare flat at the top of an ugly tenement where the drunkard's wife waited fearfully for his usual stormy homecoming. "I've brought your husband home and he's sober," Mrs. Nelson said when she opened the door.

"You never need be afraid when you're doing the Lord's work," Mrs. Nelson told her daughter later.

"Now that I look back," Major Helen says, "I can see the hand of God on my life from the very beginning." She was converted when she was ten but, in retrospect, she does not think it meant much.

"I was among a group of children who knelt one night at our penitent form," she says. "But really, I didn't like the army with its publicity and lack of privacy. I was awfully reserved, and if I'd had my own way I would have chosen something else. But the persistence of the call of God just can't be denied."

Before she became an officer she was in delicate health, Major Helen recalls. "The doctor forbade me to go through with it, and he told my parents it would kill me. But I've been an officer now for twenty-one years and have never been ill once. It's wonderful the way God has fitted me physically to do His work. When He calls a person, He always gives all the strength that's required."

Once a year Major Helen goes back to Blantyre for her annual three-week furlough. During the other forty-nine weeks she occasionally takes an afternoon off. "We are allowed to wear civilian clothes on our weekly half-day off," she says. "But we can't just close up shop and say 'I'm off.' Our free time is our last consideration."

Prepared For Spinsterhood

The army urges officers to try to organize their business lives so that they can take regular time off. Whenever Major Helen and Captain Margaret manage to abide by this injunction, they go to the parks, look in the shops or have tea out occasionally with friends, wearing plain dresses, plain hats and no jewellery. They never go to the pictures or to the theatre. "An officer who has his heart in his work finds no satisfaction in such amusements," says the major.

Neither looks forward to marriage. The army, which prescribes the form of an officer's courtship, would have to approve of their choice, and he would have to be a fellow officer. Since there are more women officers than men, some of the women must look forward to perpetual spinsterhood. "We're prepared for it when we enrol," Captain Margaret says.

They pay their own household bills and must buy their own uniforms. Their meagre earnings amount to what is left over after all the corps' expenses have been paid—rent, heat for the hall, musical instruments, literature and periodicals, Sunday school supplies, furniture. That is enough to provide only a bare minimum of comfort.

Major Helen has been teamed with Captain Margaret for eleven years. For a time they worked in Wembley, a socially select locality where the work of the corps' officers could not have been easier or pleasanter. When Major Helen was posted to St. Marylebone, her fellow officers predicted failure. "Fancy Nelson going to Marylebone," they said. "She'll never make a go of it. She's too prim and proper."

But, according to her comrade-in-arms, Major Helen can make a go of it anywhere. "Everything she touches is successful," the captain says loyally. "She's truly inspired." THE END

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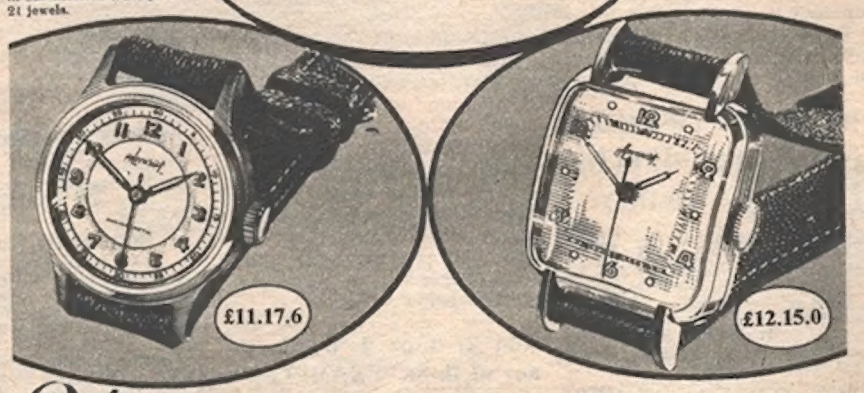

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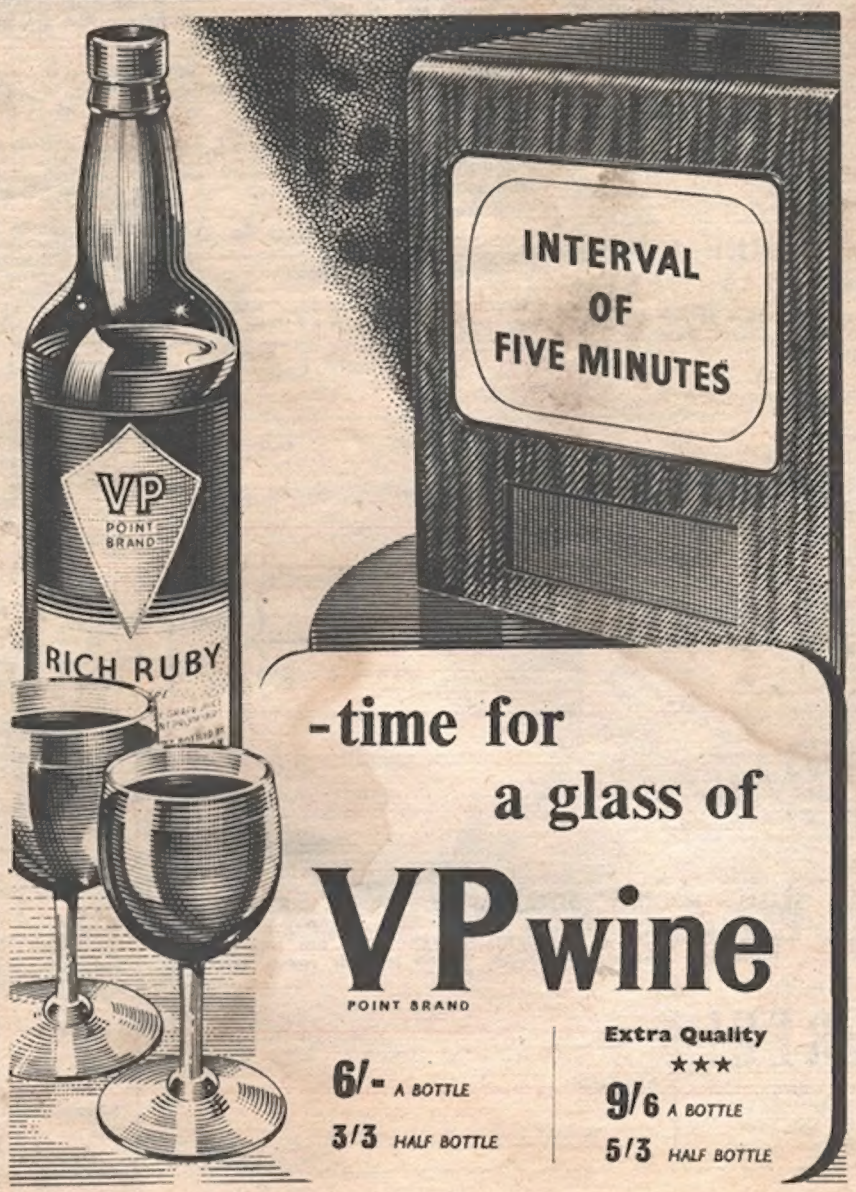

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Man, The Magician
In Darkest Africa
Letter From Home
The Law's An Ass, But
Private Enterprise
Horrifying
Motorist v. Pedestrian
Rarely Returns
Major Blunder
Has His Work Cut Out
At The Vicarage
For Keeps
As Good As New
Pioneer Grandpa
Hammering Away
Tin Of Sardines
Deliberately
Upset Mrs. Mop
The Last Waltz

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

The Great ..... Like Ours
In A ..... Like Ours
Brandishing The .....
Stumped .....
Well And Truly .....
..... Is Scarce, So

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated May 31, and in JOHN BULL dated June 7), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

ANOTHER SWISS HOLIDAY OFFER in next week's JOHN BULL!

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,833 (or Xword 785) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

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For five winners of £6 and five of £4, see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

50 Prizes of 10s. and 2,000 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

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Across Clues **XWORD 785**

1. The making of this may call for use of some kind of oily stuff
3. It's usually rain that causes this to be held up
6. In wartime, propaganda is aimed to affect the enemy's
10. These are very often forbidden
11. Commonly makes heaps
12. Such a gift is by no means certain to help recipient over stile
13. Election does give an opportunity for this

Down Clues

1. May often be regarded as cleft
2. Some are moved by every wind that blows
4. In some ways Hollywood films are very much this
5. Don't let salesman sell you shoddy stuff when purchasing such merchandise
7. Player who ignores this may get into more serious trouble later on
8. Most of one can be smoked
9. Shouldn't be spared if you want your house to look a picture
10. May contain something which is useful for medical purposes.

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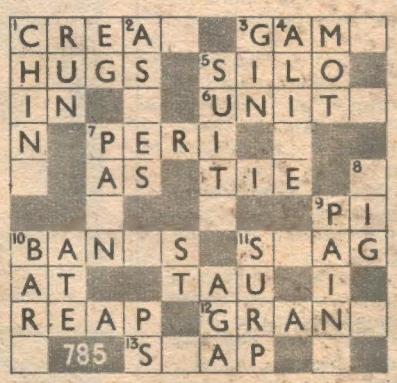

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Puzzle and form strictly copyright **785** Closing Postmark MON., MAY 12

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Signed .....
Address .....
.....

In adjudication all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated May 24.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

THE TOWN THAT LIVES ON TALK

Continued from page 12

neatly packaged silk scarf printed with views of Harrogate's most famous showplaces. "They've been on order some time," wrote Mack Cameron, whose store had produced them. "By a coincidence, they arrived this week."

Harrogate's Chamber of Trade and the Hotels and Restaurant Association give cash grants towards publicity booklets, and guarantee holiday events against loss. While the corporation offers free sporting facilities, a one-third reduction in the cost of treatment at the Royal Baths and free admission to dances and concerts held in the corporation halls, the hotels have produced special terms for delegates, and the shops arrange mannequin parades and special shopping weeks.

This co-operation takes place daily on an "old boy" basis, and reaches right down to private citizens not directly concerned with conferences. A dancing-school provides ten couples in American country dress to demonstrate square-dancing at conference receptions. The Friends of Harrogate, a voluntary organization founded just after the war, provides guides—or hosts as they prefer to be called—for delegates wishing to tour neighbouring places of historical interest. Twelve of them have even taken lessons in the deaf and dumb alphabet for the benefit of mute visitors.

Subtle Invitation

Baxter bases his publicity on the routine media of Press advertisements, guide-books, booklets, a local information bureau, posters and a travelling window-display. For conferences he uses subtler methods. Municipal officials, themselves delegates to conferences held in other places, take a personal letter from the mayor inviting the organization to Harrogate in the following year. When the question of next year's meeting place came up on the agenda of a recent conference of the National Chamber of Trade, Cameron successfully advanced Harrogate's claims in a speech from the floor.

Once, Baxter sent 116-word bulk telegrams to eighty-one conferences, cordially inviting them to Harrogate next time. It cost only a few pounds, but brought four definite bookings and dozens of inquiries.

When an organizer arrives to make his arrangements, Baxter notes his requirements, shows him the hotels and meeting-places and discusses such extras as social functions, military band concerts, mannequin parades, factory visits, garden parties, excursions and whist drives. Within four hours, the organizer is on his way back, leaving the finer points—right down to the toastmaster's gavel—to Baxter's assistant, Tony Bryant.

"So far," says Bryant, "we've been asked for nothing we haven't been able to get." If a conference has a large foreign delegation, interpreters can be supplied from a panel of local residents. One conference secretary said: "If we asked for a battleship on the children's paddling pond, Mr. Baxter would be able to provide it."

An Angry Organizer

One afternoon, Bryant had a call from the Lounge Hall. "My delegates are waiting to see some slides, and there's no projector," snapped an angry conference organizer. Bryant pointed out that there had never been any request for a projector. "Well, can you get one?" asked the organizer. Within twenty minutes Bryant produced a projector, a screen and an operator.

"Our headache," says Baxter, "is the thought of having two lots of delegates converging on the same hall. So far it hasn't happened." The main reason for this is a master diary in which conference arrangements are broken down so that duplication of halls is impossible.

Nevertheless, there have been mistakes and embarrassing moments. An eminent politician was once about to enter the Hall when someone decided that he deserved music. There were two records on the twin-turntable

gramophone, and the operator hissed: "Which? March or waltz?" Someone replied "march" and the gramophone ground out the first derisory bars of "Colonel Bogey." Baxter, who was leading the politician in, swears he did not notice. "Unfortunately, someone decided to switch off the gramophone, and the record ended in a dying screech. It brought the house down."

Baxter was once approached at a pharmacists' reception and dance by a taxi-driver who said: "I've a French party outside. They want to dance, and this is the only one in town. Can they come in?" Baxter agreed, and was surprised to find that the visitors were Marcel Boussac, the racehorse owner, and his wife.

Boussac was staying the night in Harrogate so that he could see his horse run in the St. Leger at Doncaster next day. Chatting with a group which included Baxter and Bryant, he remarked: "I shall be leading in the winner tomorrow." Though several bystanders took the tip, Baxter and Bryant did not. Boussac's Talma II won at 7-1.

Sporty Types Welcome

Such an anecdote gives Baxter a cue for mentioning in his artless way that Harrogate is also an excellent sports centre. Not only Doncaster, but Wetherby, York, Thirsk, Catterick and Ripon have racecourses within motoring distance. Harrogate itself has three golf-courses, a cricket ground at which Yorkshire regularly play, and the permanent headquarters of the Great Yorkshire Show.

One hotel manager who has stressed the sporting angle in his publicity was booked solid by mid-March from May to September. "I like the sporty types," he said. "They're good company—and they spend money at the bar."

Baxter recalls, however, that Harrogate's motto at the turn of the century was not only "the playground of the robust" but also "the Mecca of the ailing." For though the number of patients at the Royal Baths no longer touches the mid-twenties' peak of 110,000 a year, the annual average is now about 60,000, a third of whom are treated under the National Health Service. "The N.H.S. just saved our treatment side," says Baxter.

To give Harrogate a new "angle" as a holiday resort, Baxter coined in 1946 the slogan "Britain's Floral Resort," to justify which the council spends £24,000 a year on its flowers and plants. Besides rare species in the Valley Gardens and massed beds of brightly-coloured flowers—one bed which forms a roundabout contains 10,000 plants which are changed through the seasons—every suitable space is decked with flowers.

Flowers At The Station

In the centre of the town, baskets of flowers are hung from the lamp-posts. Under an arrangement with British Railways, the Parks department decorates the railway station, both to welcome visitors and to attract travellers passing through.

Baxter reckons that one of the successes of his department is that, since the war, no harassed father has brought his children, complete with bucket and spade, to ask at the information bureau: "Where is the sea?"

Recently, however, he was reading an American golfing magazine. At the top of the page, under the heading, "A lesson in geography," the editor apologized for a report in which he had placed a Missouri golf-course in Michigan. At the bottom of the same page was a reference to golf in "that well-known English seaside resort, Harrogate."

Sighing, Baxter took up his pen. "Sir," he wrote, "can I teach you another lesson in geography?" THE END

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 22 is of Wendy Hiller when a child. Her husband is Ronald Gow, the playwright.

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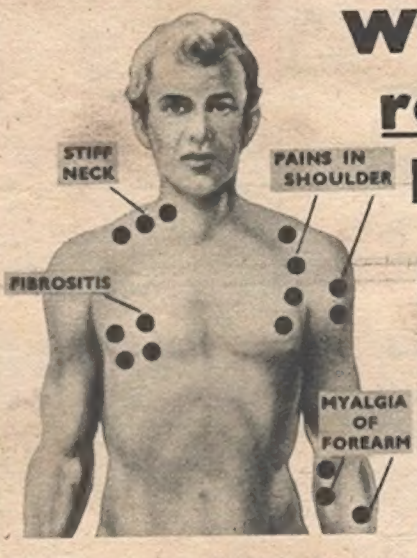

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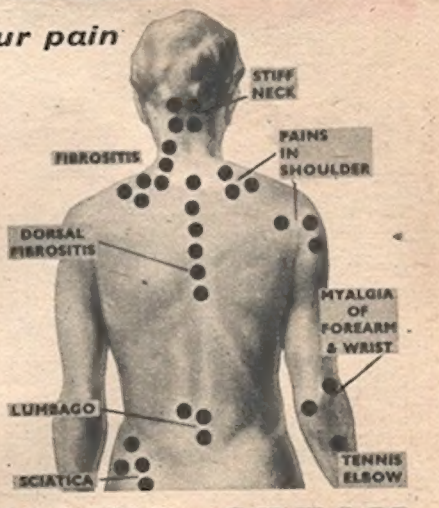

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